

**Poems by Geoffrey Grigson,  
Jonathan Price, John Hollander**



**CORNELL**  
University Press

Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) - author of the seminal feminist treatise *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* - developed a society in which the inalienable rights of women would be recognized as essential to the proper fulfillment of all humankind. Her vision grew from a life filled with passionate struggle and agony. This first complete collection of Wollstonecraft's letters reveals the extraordinary background of her intellectual and emotional development.

# COLLECTED LETTERS OF

*Mary Wollstonecraft*

"This volume can be welcomed unreservedly. 240 letters are brought together in a handsome book, which is illustrated and annotated in an exemplary way." - *Times Literary Supplement*

"This comprehensive collection of letters paints an absorbing, remarkable, and painful picture of a vulnerable, complex woman who attempted a life of independence in an age which demanded such efforts. Fine letters, a precise table of contents, and a comprehensive index complement the book's excellent appearance and apparatus." - *The Wordsworth Circle*

"The story of Wollstonecraft's life that emerges through her letters arouses pity and indignation. On the whole they convey a sense almost obsessively of private experience, evoking a woman whose real life takes place entirely in her psychic interior. Her few intense relationships become part of that interior life; her books issue directly from it. The letters show carefully and unobtrusively the background for her work, elucidating the transformations of private misery that constitute much of Mary Wollstonecraft's public achievement." - *Patricia Meyer Spacks, Yale University*

"The author of *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* and *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* was also the author of letters notable for their liveliness, simplicity of style, and for a transparent nobility in the face of steadily adverse reality. Most of these letters (Mary Wollstonecraft died in childbirth before she was 40) are either to Gordon, by whom she had a daughter, or to her husband, William Godwin, by whom she had Shelley's future wife. Necessary reading for anyone interested in the history of feminist thought." - *Virginia Quarterly Review*

"Her letters record details of the daily life and private feelings of an independent working woman; they are colored by both emotional extravagance and sharp wit. An essential resource." - *Library Journal*

"Enthralling. The collection spans the life of Mary Wollstonecraft from the age of 14 almost to the point of her death, and this, combined with the informative, unopinionated preface, enables readers to make some assessment of her character for themselves and to consider what were the forces contributing to her unique vision which later generations translated into action." - *The Spectator*

Portrait by John Hays, courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery

Collected Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft  
Edited by RALPH M. WARDLE  
with illustrations  
CORNELL UNIVERSITY PRESS  
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October 30th

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## Clio observed

By Michael Howard

### HERBERT BUTTERFIELD:

The Origins of History  
Edited with an Introduction by Adam Watson  
252pp. Eyre Methuen. £12.50.  
0 413 48370 3

Herbert Butterfield published very little during the last twenty-five years of his life. During this quarter-century which he spent punctiliously discharging the obligations that accumulated around senior scholars, especially those who take on the Mastership of a College and the Vice-Chancellorship of a University, ideas pulsed in his mind without ever quite finding an outlet. He still clung to the hope that he might one day write his long-promised life of Charles James Fox, but his real interests were deeper and broader. Unlike most of his academic colleagues, he was deeply concerned about the purpose of history and the function of historians; a concern based both on his wonder, as a Christian, about God's purpose for the world, and his sense that the historian should have more to contribute to our understanding of the present than mere accounts, however meticulous, of the past.

Butterfield's religious and professional concerns came together in his best known and most influential book, *Christianity and History*, published in 1949, in which he summed up a philosophy matured during the evil days of the Second World War. The problems of the nuclear age inspired in him no less hard thinking, but the results of it are to be traced rather in the writings of such colleagues and disciples as Martin Wight and Hedley Bull than in any work of his own. A man of immense erudition, he was always seeking more knowledge from and about the past, and from men's differing understanding of the past. Too humble, and too sceptical, to attempt a Toynbee synthesis, he none the less believed that only a Toynbeeian scope could bring real understanding. So towards the end of his life he found himself in the predicament of the English historian whom above all others he studied and admired, Lord Acton; insatiably persistent in his quest for more knowledge, continually frustrated in his quest for more light.

In his retirement Butterfield returned to an early love, historiography; why did men write history at all, and what did they hope to learn from it? It is his unpublished notes on this subject that his friend, Adam Watson, has now skilfully put together - so skilfully, indeed, that it is only towards the very end of the book that one can appreciate the scale of his problem in turning scraps of notes into coherent and intelligible prose. What emerges is a survey of the writing of history in the world over four thousand years, from the third millennium ac until the nineteenth century. There are gaps in the survey for which the editor apologizes; little is said about Islam, for example, and there is a blank in his treatment of Western historiography between Augustine and Orosius. But the book stands up as a work in its own right - not just a *Nachlass* put together by an over-dutiful disciple.

Why did men ever begin to keep records? Butterfield shows how the practice originated in the desire for self-justification and self-justification among the rulers of the Sumerian, the Egyptian, the Hittite and the Assyrian empires. Thus they recorded the victories over their adversaries and the humiliations inflicted on their victims, the sacrifices they had made to the gods as evidence of their piety, and set down genealogies to establish their legitimacy; attempts to ensure immortality in a world that they left only to enter a realm of grim darkness and grey despair. But at the same time there was a growing realization of the utility of keeping records. Among the earliest writings that survive from the Sumerians in the third millennium ac are descriptions of the disputes that led to the establishment of certain boundaries, of the social problems that explained particular laws; while the Chinese always seem to have kept meticulous records for the purpose of their governing bureaucracies.

But these were all records of the present directed towards posterity. In the ancient empires of the Middle East there was no attempt to recover the past, nor any apparent belief that its recovery would be useful to the present. In so far as there was any sense of the past, it was as a more than a disconnected and unconnected jumble. It developed in Mesopotamia, but only as a melancholy record of human endeavour constantly frustrated and destroyed by unpredictable and uncontrollable catastrophe. There was some attempt to link the natural with the supernatural, to associate secular events with the movements of celestial bodies, some sense that both man and his environment were governed by the same capricious fates. The Hittites, indeed, discerned rationality

in the heavens; but then, misfortune was the result of misinterpreting or disobeying the clear intention of gubernatorial gods - a concept later transmitted to the Greeks and Romans. But in these gods there was no sense of time, nor of purpose, nor of development - no sense in fact of history. For that mankind was indebted solely to the Jews.

On the Hebrew sense of history, and its transmission to the Christian world, Butterfield is predictably at his most interesting. The Jews, he pointed out, were obsessed as no people had yet been or have been since with their past; a past that explained the present, pointed towards the future, determined their moral values, and was understandable only in terms of a direct and continuing relationship between the Children of Israel and the God who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. If the same God subsequently allowed them to be led into captivity again, it could be due only to their transgression of His Covenant; but if they behaved properly He would in fullness of time redeem them and re-establish His Kingdom. So for the Jews, as later for the Christians, past and present, morality and history, were fused. The study of history was the study of God's revelation of Himself to man.

With the coming of Christ in the fullness of time, as he was confidently assumed by the early Christians that the nations would now be gathered together and God's purpose would be fulfilled. They were to be tragically disappointed. The Roman Empire was succeeded, not by the Fifth Monarchy of Christ, but by the irruptions of the barbarians. The confident expectations of Eusebius gave way to the sober rationalizations of Augustine, a teacher whose views Butterfield himself very largely adopted and transmitted to his disciples. The Kingdom of God was not of this world; it was outside history, yet immanent within it. God in giving man free will had left the world to be governed by its own laws, to which men had to adapt themselves; though they could not thereby be exempt from Divine judgment.

But if the world was indeed governed by its own laws, how else could these laws be discerned, except by the study of history? Such was the view of the Greeks who, according to Butterfield, had no "sense of the past" as such. Among the Greeks, asserted Butterfield, the habit of philosophical speculation was profound, but it was not a speculative history, away from the living and transient and fixing it up the eternal and immutable. They showed no

curiosity about their Minotaur and Mycenaean predecessors and had few records of their own before the fifth century ac; while the general acceptance of the Homeric epic precluded genuine historical curiosity. But they studied events in order to understand them. These were phenomena from which conclusions could be drawn as to future action - not in any teleological sense but in a framework of genuine scientific enquiry. Thucydides chronicled the Peloponnesian Wars not to glorify the participants but to improve his readers' understanding of the problems of international relations.

It was this spirit of scientific enquiry that was revived by the historians of the Renaissance and that inspired the teaching of history as part of a humanistic education until the eighteenth century and beyond. The teleological view of history as process, as development towards a foreordained end, came neither from a Church whose historians were concerned primarily with establishing its institutional continuity, nor from Jews who now looked forward to a Messianic, apocalyptic fulfilment of the Covenant - as did many of the Christian sects. It came from the lapsed Christians of the Enlightenment, thinkers who secularized the Judaic teleology into the purely lay concept of "progress": history as systematic development guided by a hidden hand that in eighteenth-century France and England was still a recognizable Deity but that Hegel was to transform into a self-fulfilling World Spirit.

At this point Butterfield's notes linked up with his earlier studies, in particular his *Wiles* lectures, reprinted as *Man on his Past*. In that he had already traced the origins of contemporary "academic" history to the "Oxford School" of the late eighteenth century. He had described von Ranke's reaction against the Hegelian tendency to use only the facts that suited their theory, and his insistence upon discovering "what really happened" in total detail before attempting to draw any conclusions from it about the nature and meaning of the past. And he had shown how the whole study and practice that has dominated "bourgeois" history in the West developed from "the German school" just as the beliefs and practices of its Marxist rivals have developed from Hegel.

With this still current confrontation Butterfield did not deal specifically, although he was fully aware of it. The Marxists, although shackled by their procrustean categories, at least accept that historians have a responsibility to make sense of the past and not simply to chronicle it. All too many of Ranke's disciples have seen it as their duty just to discover "what really happened" without feeling any need, as Ranke felt and as Acton felt, to use their knowledge to develop any philosophy about the past, or to furnish guidance to mankind as a result of it. Since their obsession with archival research restricted the vision of all but the giants among them to a parochial or at very best a national horizon, they were properly modest about the guidance that they could offer. But if the professional historians abdicated their role of explaining the world, who could effectively take their place?

The situation today has been brilliantly analysed by Professor W. H. McNeill in a lecture he delivered to the Royal Historical Society this summer, entitled "A Defence of World History". The failure of professional historians during the past fifty years to respond to the instinctive desire of the human mind "to understand things in the largest possible terms", he there stated, has made their work of decreasing interest to anybody but themselves; only when detailed researches are connected with a hypothesis that does purport to make the world make sense can the historical profession be said to earn its keep. In the 19th century, when national states were still in the making, our predecessors rendered little service by creating national histories for their respective constituencies and locating them firmly within a universal frame that in every case derived from a simple secularization of the Christian epoch. It is high time for historians to reflect once again how the world's history can be adequately conceived. Unless we seek actively and energetically to construct a believable portrait of the human past on a global scale we will have failed to perform our professional function adequately. We cannot afford to make the world our fellow citizens live in historically unenlightened.

These were the issues about which Butterfield reflected throughout the latter part of his life, and it is our loss that he should have allowed his modesty, his perfectionism and his attention to academic business to prevent him from giving his colleagues more than his intermittent thoughts about them. But where he pointed the way, perhaps others will follow.

Of economic "rationality", is economic advantage maximization as the goal without which no economic model could begin life. In one sense, all human action is rational, aiming for whatever seems at the time the most desirable; but the desirable objectives of Victorian entrepreneurs might include a quiet life, or a stationary state in their works, which might run counter to national efficiency or output, on which the discussion turns. To assume rationality at the outset is thus to argue in a circle. This is nowhere more clearly seen in the polemic against Crafts reprinted here; the weakest part of the book, two pages of sneers to two of argument, where the "ruling assumption" at the same time as the point at issue is that we cannot possibly know better than our grandparents themselves did, what was good for them.

Further, a ceteris paribus proposition, unlike the more woolly traditional historiography, once it is wrong, tends to be wholly wrong. This is the case of one of the earliest such efforts, rightly controverted in the second major section, which had sought to show that the relative decline in the rate of growth of the British economy was due to the

The last essay, written jointly with J. Richard Zacher, cuts the ground from under most of the literature on the workings of the pre-1914 Gold Standard, by showing that gold moved in response to the demand for money, and not as part of an international arbitrage process: to rectify the balance of payments. It is a typically brief, brilliant piece, capable of explaining away the incongruities of the traditional account; it has been unduly neglected.

## The Victorian success story

By Sidney Pollard

### DONALD N. McCLOSKEY:

Enterprise and Trade in Victorian Britain  
Essays in Historical Economics  
211pp. George Allen and Unwin.  
£15 (paperback, £6.95).  
0 04 942170 0

Donald N. McCloskey is, without doubt, one of the brightest stars among the "New" economic historians, equally at home among the historical literature and the formulae of econometricians. He can also write elegantly and with wit, as the first two essays in this collection amply show. To crown it all, he largely writes about Great Britain and holds the comforting doctrine, against the onslaught of most British historians, that British entrepreneurs and the economy as a whole, far from starting on a path of decline in the late Victorian era, actually performed very well and certainly no worse, given the circumstances, than their German or American equivalents in the same period. His writings on this topic have become classics.

After the two introductory pieces, which are essays in praise of the "New" economic history addressed to historians and economists respectively, this collection deals with two major themes: the Victorian economy, and Britain's overseas links from the 1840s to the First World War. The argument on the first is largely econometric: propositions are recast so as to become testable, and then "tested" against formulae using whatever statistical information is available. The strength of this procedure is that by reducing some hitherto widely held opinions to more precise economic language, their weaknesses may sometimes be demonstrated, and the relation of the *d'vire* of econometrics is avoiding the absurdities of economic history without economics. It often does its job well, as several successful demolitions on earlier dogmas on the Victorian economy amply demonstrate. Moreover, detailed accounts show that some of the key industries frequently accused of falling to adopt the latest cost-saving techniques - for example, the coal industry, iron and steel, and cotton - had sound economic reasons for doing so, and would have made losses and simultaneously reduced British national

income in the short run, had they copied foreign practice. At the same time, other industries, like chemicals and marine engineering, did indeed cling to out-of-date methods well after it would have been profitable for all concerned to switch.

McCloskey's method is thus a useful and necessary addition to the armoury of economic historians, a single immense step forward; without its abstract reasoning and the resolute combativeness of its author, it would undoubtedly have taken far longer to unseat the unsupported or untenable propositions which had held the field until then. Yet two weaknesses adhere to it. One is the general tendency to treat probabilities as certainties, correlations as proof of causation, and ratios as constant over time and space, though the point of



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slave labour. A patently false passage about hearing "day and night behind them/Salin's speech and the mighty breathing/G of the vast popular masses" which had appeared in 1947 could be dropped ten years later. And by then Zabolotsky had written a poem that was manifestly about Russian peasants and their sufferings in the camps, though this did not appear, and then not fully, until 1962, after his death. "Creators of Roads" is fine in its way, but hopelessly flawed.

Zabolotsky had suffered unspeakably in the camps, like many others. It aroused in him a quiet uncharacteristic fury to recall how the camp commandant had heard with satisfaction from his deputy that he would never write poetry again. Once he allowed himself to tell Roskina: "I am only a poet, and it's only of poetry that I can judge. I don't know, perhaps socialism really is beneficial for technology. To art it will bring death." Yet, believing this or at any rate suspecting it in his darker moments, he was happy to accept the Order of the Red Banner of Labour; officially he gave himself out in the correct way to be an optimist, although he had no illusions about the catastrophic effects of another war; and he wanted to act as befitted his tardy eminence in Soviet literature. He was not sceptical enough about these honours, Roskina concludes, and "rather than mitigating his tragic fate they deepened it".

She says of Vasily Grossman that he belonged to the old and honourable tradition in Russian literature "where the writer is moved by a passion for truth and justice", and as a result "the personality of a writer is as important as what he writes". Grossman would not accept the moral equivocations of the dialectic. Thus he rejected the death penalty in all circumstances, with the insistence of Tolstoy, and was horrified when a child's author, of all people, condoned the execution of a corrupt official with the words: "For such men I have no pity." It is not surprising that the sympathetic

editor of *Novy Mir*, Tvardovsky, should have told Grossman his novel *Life and Fate* could only see the light after another twenty-five years. (It has recently appeared in the West.) Roskina recalls his intransigence about some proposed cuts in Armenian translation notes. Here was somebody who as an author gave himself to the flames in the spirit of Jan Palach. "We watched him and saw what it means to be a writer."

Akhmatova was cast in the same mould, but of a finer substance. Grossman, like Solzhenitsyn, had never participated in the culture which she could take as her birthright: he was sixteen years younger and came to manhood in the early Soviet period. In these two are to be seen the descendants of the so fearless in unmaking hypocrisy and other allegiances. Akhmatova had Pushkin, and it was to the study of his writings and of Petersburg in the 1920s her difficulties increased. Pushkin, she dears to person: he never disappointed, and he never lost her interest in every particular of his work and life. He became for her the measure of expression. She had long ago learnt how to call things by their proper names, as he did. Chukovskaya might be satisfied with the cumbersome and foggy official formula to the recent past: mass violations of socialist legality as a consequence of Stalin. Akhmatova preferred Russian word *zastenok* (torture chamber).

She and Pasternak were often dismissed as "internal émigrés". The injustice of this term was fully apparent to Chukovskaya: "Émigrés, whether internal or abroad, fear themselves away from land and people, while these *share* the fate that befalls land and people" (her italics). It pleased Akhmatova to hear from an American visitor the

reported words of Isaiah Berlin: "Akhmatova and Pasternak gave me back my motherland." In her poetry as a whole, and not only in the *Poem*, memory has exceptional significance. Chukovskaya suggests that the key to still her work lies in the "Northern Elégie" that begins "There are three epochs in remembering". (This statement, as Akhmatova pointed out, would affront the good citizen for whom "only one epoch exists and that is our own".) Solomon Volkov in *Testimony*, the record of his conversations with Shostakovich, has spoken of memory in Russia today as a very rare and valuable thing. The constant preoccupation of Akhmatova and her friends was to give back their motherland to the Russian people - by preserving the high traditions of their literature, by naming things aright so that the recent past could be faced and overcome, and by insisting on the continuity of Russian culture and history. They had evidence even from the camps that Akhmatova's poetry, a little the worse perhaps for oral transmission, could sustain in others the will to live. Chukovskaya noted that a prime feature of her verse was its memorability, and concluded that this, together with profundity, made a poet's work truly a possession of the people.

Once again in this rich and finely edited volume of reminiscences, as in its predecessor (reviewed in the *TLS* of November 19, 1977), Lydia Chukovskaya presents a moving and very just portrait of Akhmatova. It may be added that Natalya Roskina, on a much slighter canvas, shows the same qualities of sympathetic perception and independent thought. Akhmatova was fortunate above all in her women friends, who behaved towards her with extraordinary unselfishness, accepting her imperious moods, and never for a moment failing to see the mattered supremely to Russia. She and her intimates formed a centre of civilization. In the most frightening and insecure of times they kept going a conversation, with poetry as its focus, which must never be allowed to cease.



This engraving is included in Reynolds Stone 1909-1979, published by the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society (42pp. £2.50, 0 900341 09 2) as a keepsake of the exhibition of Stone's work in the Dorset County Museum until September 12.

## A record of endurance

By Charles David Ley

ARTURO BAREA:

Valor y miedo

90pp. Madrid: José Esteban.

Arturo Barea, though he later became famous internationally as a writer, was over forty when he wrote his first small book of stories, *Valor y miedo* (Courage and Fear), describing scenes from the siege of his native Madrid during the Civil War. Though it was printed in Barcelona in 1938, the book never reached the Spanish public because the victorious Nationalists would have considered Barea's stories as Republican propaganda. A few copies, however, survived, making it possible for

this new - and, for practical purposes, first - edition to be published.

Barea met his second wife Lisa in Spain, where she had been sent from London as a war correspondent and it may have been under her influence that he began to write these stories, one or two of which Lisa translated and sent to English newspapers at the time. Later, as an exile in England, Barea achieved enormous success with his trilogy about his life in Spain, the third part of which is one of the finest literary accounts of the Spanish Civil War years ever written.

Anyone who has known Madrid will be bound to find Barea's picture of the besieged city in *Valor y miedo* both vivid and convincing. For instance, this is how the shelling of a northern district of the city is described in terms of the objects that get damaged:

Everything which was never alive, all dead things, everything born dead, acquired a life of its own. A jar fell down and broke into a thousand pieces against the stones. A shoe, a woman's shoe, dropped and then bounced about on the floor, thus threatening a step or two in the dance of death. An explosion had thrust the dining-room lamp out of place, so that it swayed violently and made its chimes croak. A piano had been left motionless and alone... on its broken leg...

Many of the pieces in this book are sketches rather than stories, but "El sargento Angel" (Sergeant Angel) has a strong narrative and well-created characters, besides being unmistakably Spanish. Angel, who has just been made a sergeant, decides to celebrate his promotion by going with a friend and two of the many prostitutes from the street he lives in to the local tavern. The prostitute he chooses is a fat, jolly girl who likes him and whom he is genuinely attracted to, but on leaving his flat he gazes at the photograph of his wife Lucía, at present separated from him because she is in a village near Burgos in Nationalist territory. The memory of Lucía spoils his little orgy and he leaves, sleeping his friend's face and accusing him of trying to steal his prostitute. Later he unexpectedly receives a letter from Lucía, which calms him down again. Being a sergeant he orders his soldier friend to return the slap in the face he unjustly gave him.

This collection of pieces is a record of how people and things endure the bombing and shelling of Madrid: the workers in the telephone exchange, the old Don Manuel who picks up courage by drinking brandy, the impoverished inhabitants of hovels on the outskirts of the town. Less effective are two stories of old peasant men who, after watching over the bodies of sons killed in battle, go out to seek death themselves while destroying some of their sons' killers in the enemy trenches. Here Barea forgets his mood of suffering determination for the sake of a more traditional and less convincing kind of heroism.

## Keeping up Greek

By Richard Jenkins

A. E. HILLARD and C. G. BOTTING:  
Elementary Greek Exercises  
157pp. Duckworth. £4.95.  
0 7156 1524 6

Eager young authors grow accustomed to being told by their publishers, in the indirect but expressive manner that publishers have, that their works are no more than the rather thin icing on a much more nutritious cake. Few new books make much money; it is the backlist that counts. How shrewd, then, of Messrs Duckworth a few years back to get hold of the rights to Abbott and Mansfield's *Greek Grammar*, for however few the schoolchildren and undergraduates studying Greek these days they will all need this book or something like it, and sales must have been steady if modest. Duckworth have since reprinted a number of other old schoolbooks, including North and Hillard's *Latin and Greek Prose Composition*, and now Hillard and Botting's elementary exercises follow in their wake.

Will anybody use them? The days of elegant composition ("Quippe qui is old hat, Jenkins, but *hipote qui* should still be good for an exhibition") are almost over, and Sir Kenneth Dover begins his foreword to *Reading Greek*, the much praised language course published in 1978 under the auspices of the Joint Association of Classical Teachers (JACT), with these words: "There is one criterion, and one only, by which a course for the learners of a language no longer spoken should be judged: the efficiency and speed with which it brings them to the stage of reading texts in the original language with precision, understanding and enjoyment." That is true, but it is also likely that the learner will not achieve the desired precision and understanding unless he tests his appreciation of the language by translating English phrases and sentences into it, and *Reading Greek* rightly provides opportunities for this exercise to be attempted. If Hillard and Botting has a use today, it must presumably be as a supplement, selectively used, to some more modern course.

For it cannot be claimed that it is an entertaining book. The compilers deliberately confined the vocabulary to the commonest words, and someone trying to work through all the exercises would probably find them wearisomely repetitive, unless he could do them very fast. As it happens, the standard Greek textbooks of the past seem in general to lack the idiosyncratic charm of some of their Latin counterparts. There is no equivalent in Abbott and Mansfield to the gender rhymes in Kennedy's *Latin Primer*, and who, once he has learnt them, can forget the terse, incantatory lyricism of the verses teaching the use of prepositions? "A, ebs, absque, coram, de, Palam, cum, ex, and e." Not that these rhymes seemed to have anything much to do with the real world. We dutifully learnt that *absque* governed the ablative, but I can still remember the start of surprise with which I first came across the word in an original Latin text; and I no more expected to find *merges, abest, or curculio, wevili*, used by an authentic Roman author than I anticipated meeting the square on the hypotenuse in the course of my daily life.

The covers and title-pages of Latin textbooks, too, were more susceptible of emendation than the Greek. Every schoolboy knows about Kennedy's *Eating Primer*. There used also to be a book teaching Latin verse composition entitled *Clivus*, "the slope". The word appeared in capital letters on the cover, and by a few strokes of the pen could be transformed into *Odinus*, "we hate it". Another Latin verse primer was called *Naso Magister*; it was years before I discovered that the phrase, "Naso the teacher", was a quotation from Publius Ovidius Naso himself and that what the poet claimed to teach was the art of seduction.

Hillard and Botting was originally devised for use at Colei Court Preparatory School and the lowest forms of St Paul's School, and it was deliberately planned to lead up to North and Hillard. In other words, it supposes a

situation in which children started Greek very young (and in which, I speak frankly, they were more prepared to be bored than they are nowadays). That situation obtains today only in a small minority of schools, all of them probably fee-paying, and altered circumstances require altered methods. This is not to say that there is no interest now in the classics; indeed, there is some evidence that the kind of adventurous pupil who in the 1960s was demanding to be taught Russian is now asking to learn Greek. The numbers are too small for conscious drawing from the statistics to be more than shaky, but the figures are interesting none the less. In 1976, when the DES changed its method of categorizing classical examination subjects, 1,533 pupils in England and Wales took Greek O level; in 1978, the last year for which I have found figures, the number was 1,559. In the same two years the figures for A level were 564 and 515 respectively.

Those figures tell little; what is very striking is the large increase, over the same period, in the numbers sitting examinations in "classical literature and civilization": from 5,471 to 7,696 at O level, and from 1,529 to 2,133 at A level. It is reasonable to suppose that a substantial proportion of these candidates come from schools at which Greek, and perhaps Latin too, is not taught. Still more intriguing is a recent survey of A level candidates in more than two dozen different subjects (though here again the caveat must be made that the numbers for classics were much smaller than for the other subjects). This showed that a higher proportion of those doing classics got to university to read the subject of their first choice than those doing any other subject. That somewhat ambiguous statistic might suggest that classics provides an easy route into university, but it is counterbalanced by the marvellous finding that the proportion of students who obtained an A and two B grades or better at A level was higher among classicists than among any other subject except medicine and veterinary medicine. The natural inference is that classics is still attracting a disproportionate number of the most gifted sixth-formers.

The hungry sheep look up: how are they to be fed? (Incidentally, back in the 1960s we were assured that an advantage of the huge new comprehensive would be the provision they could make for minority subjects. Why has that hope been so bitterly disappointed?) We have to accept that Greek will not in the foreseeable future return to those schools from which it has been lost; the fight to keep Latin is now on. There is a battle which should concern all those who believe in the value of studying arts subjects at all, for without Latin you are crippled in the study of English or any other modern European literature, and the historians are hardly in a better case. (If anyone says that it is only for medieval history that one needs Latin, mark him down for a bad historian, for it is a part of history to try to understand how the minds of those who governed, thought, created or invented were furnished, and without some appreciation of the classics that attempt cannot be made.) As for Greek, there are some devoted teachers instructing a pupil or two in the lunch-break or after hours; many sixth-formers go to Cheltenham or one of the other summer schools run by JACT for a fortnight studying Greek intensively and by all accounts enjoyably; universities are now well used to teaching undergraduates Greek from scratch. Schools which have kept Greek could surely not more devotion than the tablets it is quite common for sixth-formers to be given the option between Greek and German. Educationally this is a nonsense: in view of the long "tyranny of Greece over Germany" from Winckelmann and Goethe to Hitler and Hoffmannsthal, those planning to read German at university can only benefit from having studied some Greek at school; conversely, the classicist gains if he has access to the great works of German scholarship.

Textbooks, however simple, can tell us something about how their compilers viewed antiquity; they may even tell us something about the society

amid which they were written. The sentences which Hillard and Botting set for translation into Greek distantly recall the historians and perhaps the orators; there is no sign that Plato was in their minds. For them history consists of political and military narrative; their Greece is a land of hermits and cavalry and battles against the Persians in the cause of liberty. At other times and in other places the classical civilizations have looked very different. I was looking recently at a Russian schoolbook designed to teach Soviet children - aged eleven or so, I should imagine - about ancient world. The style of the many colour-plates was instantly familiar from countless Ladybird books (if our leaders ever wish to encourage détente again, they should hold a congress of children's book illustrators, and nation will speak unto nation). But if the style was familiar, the content was less so: picture after picture showed slaves being chained, sold, flogged or otherwise abused. One plate alone seemed to echo our own educational iconography: crucified figures upon a hill, their sheeps dramatically dark against a sun setting coarsely splendid, in yellow and purple behind them. But no: this merely represented the aftermath of Spartacus' slave revolt.

The social history of the ancient world was taught at my own school through the medium of a book called *SPQR*, the daily life of a little squirt called Publius. Publius (I forget his full name) was in fact a historical character, or at least his name was, as it had been taken from the tombstone of a youth found somewhere along the Appian Way. Slavery featured here too but in the very different form of the lovable old doorkeeper, who was kept chained up at the entrance to the house and treated rather like a favourite collie dog. Publius was particularly sweet to him. This virtuous and sentimental child earned the dislike of us all, and there was general satisfaction when Chapter Six saw him falling ill. And then suddenly - oh joy! - the truth dawned upon us. Publius' name was taken from a real ancient Roman; the real Publius had died young; the fictional Publius was destined for the same fate (mainly, no doubt, so that ancient funeral customs could be properly described). And sure enough, after going through a number of treatments for his illness, he died. The full range of Roman medical practice, he passed away leaving a few parting words reminiscent in their improving character of the deathbed speech of Master Henry King. The lovable old doorkeeper was freed in his memory.

The direct ancestor of *SPQR* and other book like it is Wilhelm Becker's *Gallus*, a highly didactic account of the life of a Roman youth, first published in 1838 and followed two years later by a Greek counterpart, *Charikles*. The appearance of these works, which were soon translated into English, going through many editions in the next fifty years, reflected the nineteenth-century idea that the domestic life of a people was the key to its history, a conception that was created by such diverse influences as the excavations at Pompeii and Herculaneum; the novels of Sir Walter Scott; and the cosiness of the *Biedermeierzeit*. It may be that the success of Becker and his disciples had a bad effect upon classical education, putting social history into a compartment of its own; the cultural life of the ancient world became the lighter side of classical learning, separate from the serious business of prose composition and exact linguistic understanding.

It is one of the merits of *Reading Greek* that, unlike traditional primers, it blends social and cultural history with the teaching of the language. Indeed, the historian of the future may find it a source of insight into the preoccupations of the late twentieth century, though he should probably make allowance for the research interests of Sir Kenneth Dover. Here too slavery is prominent, though less as a type of economic system than for its social and moral effects. The exploitation of women, the collapse of a traditional morality, and above all sex are the dominant themes. The illustrations are lavish and in every sense revealing. The student is required at an

## Conversations

The sounds of freight-trains, the old stories of the night, that they're coming to get you, that they will take you with them, but what remains is no more than the mistling that's always there,

or the gray of a windmill sea in the evening, maybe underneath there is still a very slow breathing, but you can't see it, a sleep so deep, so for good, as long

as you live, something like that, she says. And I who ever wanted these conversations, who have never had an answer, because I, too, don't know a name for what I don't hear and don't see, but am lying

now against her body, I think of her as if she were a child that isn't a child anymore, of the sounds of the night, the colour of the old summers by the sea.

Or she says nothing, is only silent. It is true, further and further away the soft freight-trains disappear into the night, they came to get me, but I didn't go, I stay and listen until I hear oozing anymore.

Or she is deadstill, it is as if she were asleep. I see her lying, and indeed in her body lives the secret of the swaying in a windmill sea. I keep on looking until I see nothing anymore.

Thurs is, I say, and I think, it isn't there. The words I use to say: Thurs has been a time and it has gone now, Thurs is a plain and this, too, is deserted, they are consolation, but for what.

Not for what has been, for but for later: I hear, but the silence after, I see, but what is no more, I think, but about what.

Rutger Kopland

translated from the Dutch by Ria Leigh-Loohuizen

early stage to understand such useful terms as *eros*, *poros* and *aprophrosina*. I have searched through Hillard and Botting for any occurrence of these words, but in vain.

St Paul's School, for which Hillard and Botting was originally written, has moved from the comb-gothic splendours of West Kensington to new premises on the banks of the river at Barnes; through those bright, clean classrooms the ghosts of Victorian schoolmasters do not walk. But Abbott and Mansfield and likewise North and Hillard were in part the products of Bristol, for both Mansfield and North were assistant masters at Clifton College, where, as well as upon any spot of English ground, the spirit of upper-class Edwardian boyhood can be recaptured; the smell of boiled cabbage and Latin of impartialism and fair play is almost palpable. Here is the chapel in which Newbolt learnt "To set the Cause above renown, To love the game beyond the prize, To honour, while you strike him down, The foe that comes with fearless eye." Here are the playing-fields where boys were taught to play up and play the game, here the close in which that breathless hush awaited the result of the cricket match. (And what cricket! A plaque at the side of the field commemorates the fact that here a batsman made the highest score ever recorded anywhere in the world: six hundred and something runs.) A darker note also intrudes: the view from that famous close to the cricket field is now blocked by a massive monument to the old boys killed in the Boer War, a reminder of a world where colonialists died and Gentlemen jammed in good earnest. To one side stands the gateway built to commemorate the dead of the Great War, and between the two memorials a large statue, too large, of an old boy whom between the wars the school thought it appropriate to honour: Field-Marshal Lord Haig.

In such a setting the past hardly seems a foreign country at all. And yet beyond the playing-fields, behind the big square subside, miles of Pembroke Road, once celebrated by our present poet laureate ("Now that I have retired from the bank I have more leisure time for church finance"), there now looms strange new shapes: the blunt-ended aluminium-sheathed spire of All Saints Church and, odder still, the soaring concrete fins of the Roman Catholics' super new space-age cathedral. This curious collocation of the old-fashioned and the new, of the strange and the familiar, may perhaps stand as a symbol for the teaching of classics in our schools today, an enterprise still rooted in nineteenth-century soil but growing out of it into new and sometimes experimental forms. Latin and Greek face a tough challenge, but there is now some hope that they will emerge from this challenge looking stronger and more attractive. Perhaps the reprinting of Hillard and Botting, useful or not, is a straw in the wind.

*Delectus ex lumbis et elegis graecis*, edited by M. L. West (295 pp. Oxford University Press: the Clarendon Press. £7.95. 0 19 814589 6) brings together the largely mutilated remains of Greek elegiac and iambic verse in an accessible format. It includes, as West's large-scale edition in two volumes could not, the very substantial new fragment of Archilochus which Merkelbach and West first published in 1974 (and which was reprinted as an appendix to Professor Lloyd-Jones's *Females of the Specter* along with a translation). Each new discovery of this kind tends to close the circle of classical scholarship. Now we know why Hesychius the lexicographer tells us that someone used the expression "besides the divine business" to mean "besides sexual intercourse": it is Archilochus, outspoken as ever, who, finding that Neobule is losing her charm as she grows older, is trying to seduce her younger sister into gratifying him by reminding her that "the pleasures of Aphrodite are many".



## Safe landings

By Holly Eley

LAURIE COLWIN

The Lone Pilgrim  
211pp, Collins, £6.95,  
0 001 221437 7

"The idea of committed, settled love is as remote to a romantic as lunar soil." This one of Laurie Colwin's middle-class WASP heroines optimistically pigeonholes emotion before concentrating on practical problems, the resolution of which provides her not only with immediate fulfillment but also with the will-power to continue to avoid monogamy. All the heroines of the thirteen stories in *The Lone Pilgrim* are prone to declarations such as "Vow to those who get what they desire", "I don't want social life. I want love, or nothing", or "When you fall in love like that, it strikes like a disease, and you can understand why nineteenth-century poets felt they were either sick with love or dying of it". This kind of Jean Rhysian attitude in John Cheever country would seem null, were it not that most of these women, before venturing on to the highwire of a complicated love affair, have provided themselves with the

safety-nets of a loving, loved family and a satisfying job.

Elizabeth, in "An Old-Fashioned Story", distances herself from her denigrating parents when they insist that her future lies with their best friend's son Nelson. She calls him her "childhood disease"; but although he puggishly bakes cookies for his mother's birthday, plays chess with his father and wraps himself up warmly in the cold, his example teaches her how little it takes to please, and how to protect herself. She is mature enough not to rebel overtly, free enough eventually to choose Nelson for herself. In "Debra's Father", the daughter of "people who had money instead of imagination" is infatuated with a Czech man. Ultimately, her close observation and analysis of him save her from obsession.

When he was with his wife he looked subdued and solitary, careful as he took her arm. He held her just close enough to make the hearts of his other conquests jump, should they ever run into him when he was with his wife. That closeness announced a brand understood only by the two of them.

One kiss is enough to give

Elizabeth the courage to escape from small-town convention and her stability remains intact. Polly, in "Family Happiness", is married to her eccentric parents, boring husband, two perfect children and her prestigious job. However, the missing ingredient, is provided by her lover, Lincoln, and with good sense and timing she manages to have them all. The only weak character is the feeble single guest in "The Lone Pilgrim", who relies heavily on the sentimental trappings of an Isadora Wing and on dated Hohen Caulfield jokes - though she too keeps her job and gets her man in the end.

The best story is "The Achieve of the Mystery of the Thing", the only one in which the central love affair is not between a man and a woman. Hopkins' endnote is a metaphor for marriage, and a lesson in the "Professor Thorne Speiser's stoned wife" and the inanimate, in a carefully imagined 1960s campus ambience, furnishes scope for descriptive humour.

Because of Laurie Colwin's detached sense of the absurd and because she does not cheat, she is able, in this assorted second collection of stories, to exploit a demanding genre to the full and sustain a potentially risky theme without descending into bathos.

## Psittacine situations

By David Profumo

MICHAEL BASSI

The Killed Parrot  
200pp, The Melindur Press, £6.50,  
0 00002 55 1

"How can you be Jewish and a Scotsman?" teases Aimi. "I'm not Jewish", retorts the youthful Drummond Cranks, raising his kilt and silently displaying his unimpeachable, thereby disowning for the first time his father's Jewish origins. This concern with national traditions and family practices continues to inform Michael Bassi's entertaining first novel, and is not the last appearance of his hero's formidable "killed parrot".

Drummond is the elder son of Robby Cranks, a staunchly traditional second generation Edinburgh jeweller, and of Hilary, a fastidiously housebound mother who, at the start of the book, is dying of a nasty complaint called French Polio. Refusing to comply with his father's wishes that he become an apprentice in the family workshops, Drummond sets up an independent business where his college-leant expertise makes him fast money. This progress away from his family and into the lurid world of modern Edinburgh society eventually takes him to the Killed Parrot, a tasteless and exclusive tartan restaurant which epitomizes the fiercely commercialized face of traditional Scotland which he begins to embrace. The owner of the joint, the sinister Bogart Johanson, subsequently entices Drummond into partnership in the Floating Parrot, a converted sewage-dumper-turned-casino, and it is on this kitsch shrine to materialism, replete with doric pillars, that Drummond, once again in numerous conversations with Aimi, accidentally activates a mechanism that jettisons all the other guests from the hold into the sea, thus neatly disposing of his accumulated problems.

It is an enviably convenient move, and provides an apt, dismissive close to this episodic novel. Not every example of Bassi's carefully contrived narrative procedure is as fortunate, however, for there are many instances where subtlety is sacrificed to a single punch-line or pun. Indeed, it is characteristic of his style that these elements which provide most amusement and intrigue can as easily collapse into banality: arresting similes deteriorate into clichés with no apparent parodic purpose ("his hair blowing like some demented Greek god figure"); the often genuinely witty dramatic sketches elsewhere lapse into lamentable B-movie scripting ("He'd spoken without thinking and was surprised at himself. 'Why did you come?' It was a leading question and he knew it. 'I had to see you.' 'I like you but I don't love you.' There is a similar disparity in his large cast of characters: some, like Aimi's massive American husband, Red, are successful caricatures featuring in the many eighteenth-century-style farcical scenes; but on occasions the bizarre seems to be gratuitous, as in the case of Montgomery McGovern, an eccentric dwarfman with a tin leg, who is metamorphosed by degrees into Hitler - though, to his chagrin, he is finally mistaken for the *Evening Times* "Chairman for a Day".

The busy weave of the novel is concerned to show the way in which people attempt to attain circumstance, to forge an existence independent of their origins, and, not surprisingly, end up falling foul of their aspirations. This is hardly a new theme, but the central figure of Drummond energizes the novel and organizes its excesses: with the surreal opportunism of a Don Quixote character he moves, apparently unscathed, from one social arena to another, and, as the illustration on the cover suggests, he becomes himself a kind of killed parrot, combining the uniform of the outwardly respectable world of the Edinburgh gold-diggers with his hereditary psittacine physiognomy. If the book is in places infuriatingly overwritten, it is saved by the lively truthfulness of Drummond's personality, and it is not surprising to discover that Mr Bassi, himself of dual nationality, is a jeweller from Edinburgh.

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## Historical processes

By Neil Taylor

JOHN TOFT

The Dew  
235pp, W. H. Allen, £7.95,  
0 491 02745 1

*The Dew* completes a quartet of novels (the others being *The Barges*, 1969; *The Wedge*, 1972; *The Underground Tree*, 1978) which follows the interrelated lives of certain families from the Potters during the past century. *The Underground Tree* was set in the late 1960s, while *The Dew* steps back two generations to the First World War and expands on an incident referred to briefly in *The Wedge* and *The Underground Tree* as part of the Buller family's private folklore. This is the giving of a copy of *New From Nowhere* by a young relative of the local Earl to Joe Buller, a young man literally undermining the Earl's estate. William Morris's book represents for the miner the beginning of a journey of self-awareness and political education; even though his socialist vision darkens, it is handed on in the other novels to his son and then to his granddaughter.

Most of the characters in *The Dew* ponder the significance of their own lives. Merely learning the phrase "objective historical phenomenon" from his tutor in the North Staffs Miners' Higher Education Movement had once seemed to give Joe the power to change his and others' destinies. After the death of his mother, however, he comes to know that everything that happens to him is the opposite of what he would have wanted, for "he had been taken up by the historical process and it was going to have its way with him". The

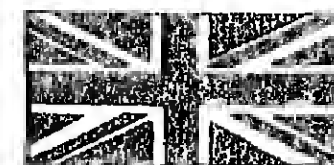
story ends with his death in the First World War.

The novel's title arises out of a passage at its opening. While inspecting a spider's web Joe, "realized with a shock that the jewels of the intersection were not dew as he had at first thought, but tiny water-blue flies. The spider suddenly awoke from her hot trance and plucked the threads to snatch one of her victims". John Toft's attempt is to persuade the reader of the beauty and complexity of the material world, but also of the simple, often cruel, principles operating through it. Unfortunately, two sets of factors work against the novel's creation of a sense of life.

There are, firstly, the formal factors. The novel is short but the plot is insufficiently dynamic and the characters are insufficiently original to cope with a social range as ambitious as that of *Black House*. And while each new chapter moves to the viewpoint of a different character (refusing to settle for one rather than another) the resulting balletic effect is ultimately static. Secondly, there are the ideas. Toft is capable of left, humorous, keen-eyed writing (as in his collection of stories about Malaysia published in 1973, *The House of the Arouching*, where the relation to autobiography and therefore to history was probably easier to deal with) but here he is driven to opt for the typical at the expense of the unique and he is sometimes caught asserting what hasn't been adequately dramatized. *The French Lieutenant's Woman* has similar weaknesses but when that hook appeared Fowles's ideas about history and fiction had the bite of witfulness and novelty. *The Dew's* history and fiction are excessively pre-digested, and too many ripples of melodrama disturb the surface of what is nevertheless a well-intentioned novel.

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# Solitaire, solidaire

By Victor Brombert

HUBERT JUIN:  
Victor Hugo  
Tome I, 1802-1843  
882pp. Paris: Flammarion.  
2 08 064209 X

What is left to discover about Victor Hugo? The answer is disconcerting. Few authors of his stature, about whose public and private life so much was written, remain so badly known. He was emasculated by the pieties of the Third Republic, which petrified him in the statuesque pose of *père béni*, a symbol of democratic virtues, represented by new generations of writers uncomfortably aware of his crushing superiority, betimied by antiquities which consistently included only his more sentimental or flashy pieces. Yet no poet's work is less suited to being immobilized in the display-case of an anthology. Hugo set his sights not on the pen but on poetry, not on the well-wrought artifact (though he is a splendid craftsman and lord of language) but on poetic process, and becoming.

To call Hugo, as did Gide, the most powerful assembler of images and master of syntax in the French tradition is true enough, but is almost as wide of the mark as the much quoted "Victor Hugo, héros" of Cocteau's quip comes closer to the truth: "Victor Hugo was a madman who thought he was Victor Hugo." For Hugo's supreme talent was essentially a mythopoetic nature: he was able to convert the raw facts of his life into a destiny, and then relate this destiny to the configurations of history. Hubert Juin's detailed and leisurely paced new biography juxtaposes from the outset the family drama (the hostility between father and mother, the rivalry between brother and brother) and the drama of external events (the Napoleonic adventure, Waterloo, the Restoration), thereby suggesting the powerful bond between private obsessions, political evolution, and a strikingly personal reading of history. Hugo's literary consciousness becomes the stage of a historical psycho-drama, whose symbolic actors are the Father, Napoleon, the King, the guillotine. The true monsters, however, are within. It is by drawing them out into the open that Hugo constructs himself. The man becomes a text. Hence the importance of literary documents such as *Promontoire*, *Journal*, and *William Shakespeare* which deal with the veriginous poetry of dreams and the abyss of genius.

If Hugo the poet is still little known, Hugo the novelist is even less understood. To judge *Les Travailleurs de la mer* or *L'Homme qui rit* by the standards of the French realistic novel from Balzac to Zola is to miss the subversive and surprisingly modern nature of his fiction-making, which undermines and decenters the subject, using character and plot to achieve the effects of visionary prose poetry. Yet each of his novels has at its core definable moral and socio-political concerns: *Le Dernier Jour d'un condamné*, the question of capital punishment; *Nous-Dieu de Paris*, the transitions of history; *Les Misérables*, the articulations of religious faith and political beliefs; *Quatrevingt-Treize*, the legitimacy of political violence; *L'Homme qui rit*, a carnivalesque political vision that anticipates and illustrates the theories of Bakhtin.

M. Juin's biography is part of a growing pattern of critical reassessment that has nothing to do with hagiography. The earlier work of J.-B. Barrère and Pierre Albouy set the tone. More recently, the chronological edition of Hugo's complete works under the editorship of Jean Massin became the rallying-point for a distinguished group of younger scholars of unusual critical sensitivity - among whom Jean Gaudon, Jacques Seebecher, and Anne Uberfeld, whose study of Hugo's plays (*La*

*Rui et le Bonfou*, 1974) has far-reaching implications. Juin, who is not an academic critic, is obviously aware of their work. When he speaks of the priority of language over meaning, of "poésie inter-rimpuce" and "échatement du Je", of *Cromwell* (and the famous preface) as a political meditation, of Hugo's vociferous complex, he echoes some of the motifs of contemporary Hugo studies.

What clearly emerges from this first volume on a life that spanned almost the entire nineteenth century is the realization that Hugo, nearly a hundred years after his death, again looms as the towering figure of his time. Reassessment of course not the proper term. There is hardly a major writer of the nineteenth century who did not stand in awe of Hugo's poetic powers. Even masters of irony ceased being ironic when speaking about him. Flaubert proclaimed that Hugo made his heart beat faster and louder than anyone, that he simply adored the "immense vieux". Next to him, Flaubert felt, all other contemporary writers, himself included, seemed pale. ("Hugo enfonce tout le monde"). As for Baudelaire, he asserted in a dithyrambic article that modern French poetry would be poor indeed had this rare and providential poet not appeared on the horizon. Baudelaire praised not only Hugo's extraordinary verbal resources, but his ability to decipher the great dictionary of nature, and to dig into the inexhaustible treasure of the "universal analogy".

The admiration was always there; only the perspective has changed. Hugo no longer appears merely as the prodigious pyrotechnist posing as the favourite interlocutor of God. The past two decades have brought into sharper focus - in part because of our own concerns - the relation between poetic vision and ideology as well as Hugo's love-hate relation with history. Recurrent images - the statue, the tower of Babel, the spider, the monster, the sea changes, the grinning buffoon - can all be linked to a fundamental project. The well-known antitheses and oxymorons, the seditious tropes, far from proposing irreconcilable opposites, function as harmonizing elements. The prophetic voice has been related to Hugo's graphic art, and to a morally inspired hallucination that makes of him a brother to Goya. Yet the visionary thrust of his work is always controlled by a will to lucidity, by a longing for order. "Vanquished Chacal," the symbolic title of the play in *L'Homme qui rit*, points to a need to overcome his own inner anarchy as well as to the political tensions of a man trying to reconcile commitment to progress with allegiance to the past.

Nothing illustrates these creative tensions better than the dialectics of laughter, which Hugo endows with revolutionary potential. In fact, he defines Revolution as the hour of laughter: hence the importance of the king's buffoon. The threatening grimace of the oppressed challenges the cruel laughter of the oppressor. The misshapen faun facing the laughing gods on Olympus in Hugo's poem "Le Satyre" and finally overpowering them with his cosmic song, is the mythical embodiment of a victory from below. For laughter is also the prerogative of the oniric poet. In *Promontoire* and *Journal*, Hugo refers to the hilarity of dreams; in the poem "Les Mages," he sees the vatic poet as a high priest of laughter. The poet's visionary and political themes thus merge.

Julia considers the young man's developing views of the writer's function. A determination to make an impact through a literary career was in itself not unusual at the time. The recent example of Chateaubriand provided the specific model of literature as presence-in-the-world. But Hugo went beyond such a relatively simple ambition.

He came to see literature as a spiritual power, and the poet as *sacerdos magnus*. Anticipating the Symbolist creed, he viewed the Book as a spiritual instrument, and the world as a text whose signs need to be deciphered. Hugo's true "modernity," however, is to be found elsewhere - in the fascination with inscriptions, traces, effacements, dissolving processes, and in the belief that history itself is a "text".

The first volume of this biography carries us from 1802 (Hugo always liked to think that he was born with the century) to 1843, the year of his daughter's death by drowning. This personal tragedy, more perhaps than the events of 1851 that sent him into long and self-willed exile, account for a profound renewal leading to the great creative period of Jersey and Guernsey. The book highlights the child's initiation to cruelty and oppression in Spain (where his father was a general under Napoleon), the turbulent relations of his parents and subsequent divorce proceedings, the precocious triumphs of the fifteen-year-old poet whose talents were officially recognized by the Académie Française, his marriage coinciding with his brother's fit of insanity (they were in love with the same young woman), his early literary successes culminating in the "bottle" of *Hernani*, his love affair with the actress Juliette Drouet which was destined to last until her death half a century later, his election to the Académie Française at the age of thirty-nine, his growing political ambitions. The most significant aspect of these years is the evolution, away from early royalist allegiances, toward a rediscovery of the great fervour of 1789, and an eventual, though undogmatic, commitment to revolutionary ideals.

Thorough documentation, familiarity with Hugo's work, an ability to keep political events in perspective, are among the qualities of Juin's study. He writes with open-mindedness, without pedantry, skillfully blending narrative, passages from letters, personal interpretations. Some readers will no doubt prefer André Maurois's old biography - better crafted, more dramatic, more concise. Juin at times moves very slowly, and he indulges in vague psychologizing; at others, he becomes needlessly elliptical, suggesting mysteries that remain unexplored. One might have hoped for a brisker pace. The advantage of his method is that the reader, deprived of the glamour of the old days of the war when populations, inspired by a sense of patriotic purpose, were properly amenable to the neo-liberal design for their betterment.

Of course, Galbraith is far too individual, and considerable, a figure to be bounded by the conventional pieties of his generation. At a time when most economists were obsessed with increasing the quantity of material goods, Galbraith in *The Affluent Society* (1958) foreshadowed the later concern of environmentalists with the quality of life. At a time when American neo-liberals were busy selling Keynes to Kennedy, Galbraith was writing *The New Industrial State* which showed how great corporations were manipulating the state for their private good. These two important books, however, did not break with the neo-liberal faith that, in the last analysis, the forces of industrial society could be channelled by an intellectual elite towards its vision of the good life.

Above all, Galbraith stands out by his style. The style is very much the key to the man. Its chief characteristics are wit and irony. The Galbraith style serves many purposes and explains many things about his relationship with the American establishment and the nature of his influence. Galbraith, like Keynes, is the subversive insider, showing up the folly of the "secular priesthood" at the commanding position at the centre. But whereas Keynes's popular style

JOHN KENNETH GALBRAITH:  
*A Life in Our Times*  
Memoirs  
563pp. Andre Deutsch. £7.50.  
0 233 97384 4

The rate of human obsolescence has speeded up mightily. Intellectuals are still more durable than athletes, but not much more. In the past, intellectual obsolescence more or less coincided with mental decay. Now it can hit in the full tide of maturity. One is labelled a man of yesterday long before one has reached tomorrow. The reason, of course, is that the intellectual capital of the honest man has become insufficiently liquid to adjust to the frenzied rush of events. The intellectual spends years building up a stock of ideas, only to find that history has swung off in an unexpected direction; or, as it were, to have done so, which may be just as important. Marxists alone enjoy the secret of eternal youth, since nothing that happens ever takes them by surprise.

Something of this unplanned, and clearly undesired, obsolescence has afflicted Galbraith. The last President to use his drafts on economic policy was Lyndon Johnson in the mid-1960s. Galbraith was then in his late fifties. Serviceability to government might seem an odd criterion for judging intellectual worth. Yet it was a criterion which the statist liberal intellectuals of Galbraith's generation had made peculiarly their own. Brought up on the New Deal, the Keynesian Revolution, and government service in the Second World War, their intellectual investments were geared to problem-solving by the means of deliberate state action. Collapse of faith in the state left them high and dry. This collapse was brought about by Vietnam, Watergate, and growing ungovernability, domestic and international. Who now believes that governments can deliver what the statist liberal intellectuals promised? Keynesian management has broken down; the Welfare State is everywhere in crisis; the American-led international system is in disarray. New conservatives and neo-Marxists could at least unite on the proposition that the hyperthyroid state of the neo-liberal imagination was creating more problems than it was solving. With this change of mood, neo-liberal clubland became increasingly confined to persons of a certain age. Its expertise was decreasingly in demand. Its conversation showed a marked tendency to revert to the themes of the good old days of the war when populations, inspired by a sense of patriotic purpose, were properly amenable to the neo-liberal design for their betterment.

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# Prophet of the liberal State

By Robert Skidelsky

was shaped by his hatred of incompetence. Galbraith, one feels, was moved more by the need to affirm superiority and placate the resentment engendered by the affirmation. Irony offered the ideal mode. The point was made that we were ruled by dunderheads, but in a manner which would amuse even the dunderheads. Above all, criticism was deflected into laughter. In this latter aspect, Galbraith's prose - objectively as the Marxists would say - has served a conservative purpose. Irony is the enemy of passion. The resulting emotional flatness, however, can pose a problem for the Galbraith reader. It does so in his latest offering which, despite delicious touches - as when he describes a Democratic Governor as "marginally, although not thoughtfully, to the right of Herbert Hoover" - turns on the mockery too mechanically to be altogether satisfying. None the less, his autobiography is sufficiently thought-provokingly self-revealing as a good autobiography should be. It also offers a witty, amused commentary on the public events and on the bureaucratic politics in which Galbraith was involved. Students of government will find it no less rewarding than will students of Galbraith.

Galbraith clearly feels he started life with a handicap: Born in 1908, a Canadian of Scottish descent, and into a modestly affluent farming family far from the corridors of power, he grew up with a consciousness of superior intellectual gifts and inferior social position. "My legacy," he writes, "was the inherent insecurity of the farm-reared boy in combination with an aggressive feeling that I owed it to all I encountered to make them better informed." The sense of social inferiority was reinforced by what on several occasions Galbraith refers to as his "gracelessness" and extreme "visibility" due to his great height. He needed to disarm as much as to impress. An attitude of contempt for intellectual inferiors coexisted uneasily with a tendency to "concede to those of superior social assurance and grace." The Galbraith style was formed from these elements. Although Galbraith writes affectionately, if briefly, about his wife, Kitty, and his sons, there is hardly a mention of his parents. His mother, "a beautiful, affectionate and decidedly firm woman," died when he was still a child. His father, "a moderately well-compensated

township and county official," is not mentioned after page 3. One gets the feeling Galbraith was glad to leave home.

He was trained as an agricultural economist at the Ontario Agricultural College, for which he formed a considerable dislike, and at Berkeley, which he recalls with affection. He was much influenced by Thorstein Veblen, with whom he has been compared. "Veblen's scholarship was a corruption against all who, in consequence of wealth, occupation, ethnic origin or elegance of manner, made invidious claims to superior worldly position. I knew the mood." In 1934 came the offer of an instructorship at Harvard. Word had also reached Galbraith that "a nearly unlimited number of jobs were open to economists at unbelievably high pay in the federal government." That summer, before going to Harvard, Galbraith spent some months working in the Department of Agriculture. It was his first experience of Washington politics and Roosevelt's New Deal. Moderately radicalized by the Depression, and by exposure to Berkeley's young Marxist intellectuals, Galbraith found in the New Deal a reformist faith, policy, and activity adequate to his needs and ambitions. "My view [of Roosevelt] was of a man who saw the United States as would a kindly and attentive landlord, concerned in all aspects with the lives of his tenants and the estate in which they dwelt. . . . When he had decided that this was the truth." With the publication of Keynes's *General Theory* in 1936 came a theory adequate to sustain Roosevelt's exertions.

Keynes was the great revelation for Galbraith's generation. The complex sources of his influence on the Harvard of the late 1930s are well summarized:

Here was a solution to depression and unemployment, the most urgent problems of the time. It was also a conservative one. The market, the subject of a totemic worship by economists, continued to function as before. Private property, the focal point of conservative passion, remained undisturbed. . . . Yet the Keynesian proposals also produced a wonderfully choleric reaction from the right. In consequence, you

could be concerned with saving capitalism, be in the ultimate sense a conservative, and still be thought a vigorously innovative radical. Never was radicalism so safe. Keynes himself had made his career by attacking men in high position who join comfortably to reassure each other in their mutual commitment to error. . . . Though young and unimportant, by following the master we could feel superior to the great men of Morgan's, Chase, National City and the New York Federal Reserve Bank.

The detachment in this account shows that Galbraith, unlike orthodox American Keynesians such as Paul Samuelson, never accepted Keynes as a complete and final revelation. The early New Deal notion of corporate power as a distorting influence on the American economy was never entirely abandoned by Galbraith in favour of the new Keynesian analysis. Galbraith's picture of the working of the post-war American economy is really a synthesis of these two strands of thought. The centre of the stage is occupied not by the Keynesian state but by the great corporation. Keynesianism represented an adaptation by the government to the needs of private power, not the management by the state of an "economy" in which no firms had power. Equally, although Keynes's achievement convinced Galbraith of the power of ideas, and more generally of the intellectual class, to influence events, the focus of his mature writings has been on the technological dynamism which produced the great corporation, not on the intellectual dynamism which produced the *General Theory*. Whether the latter was even a necessary condition of the Keynesian Revolution is left unclear.

From Harvard, Galbraith went to Princeton, which he recalls with Veblenesque distaste, and from there into Roosevelt's war administration eventually as Commissioner of Prices, controlling all prices in the United States, with a staff of over 4,000. It was a heady experience for someone still in his early thirties, which did nothing to diminish Galbraith's natural sense of superiority. It was his paper, "The Selection and Timing of Inflation Controls", which led to his appointment in 1941. Paying much more attention than was usual for a Keynesian to structure

ral imbalances in the economy, Galbraith argued that control of inflation required selective price controls as well as Keynesian demand management. Selective controls led inexorably to general controls. The success of such policies, both in the United States and Britain, in restraining inflation bred a dangerous illusion among the Galbraith generation of economists in both countries. It was that the same methods could as readily be applied to the problem of peacetime inflation. It was the intellectuals who had served in government during the 1940s who were loudest in their advocacy of an "income policy" in the 1960s. The difference in social psychology between the two periods was largely ignored. Galbraith indeed recognizes here that one reason for the success of price controls during the war was that Americans "worked . . . not for current consumption but for the promise of future goods". But he does not apparently draw the conclusion that such forbearance is not voluntarily available under peacetime conditions. With William James, statist politicians and intellectuals have sought for "the moral equivalent of war" in order to keep the government controls. But capitalist democracies have discovered no such moral equivalent, nor are they likely to. People can distinguish between a real crisis and a Harold Wilson crisis.

Peace brought little diminution in the Democratic Administration's demand for Galbraith's services. As a member of the United States Strategic Bombing Survey, he headed a team of economists set up to assess the effect of Allied air attacks on the German war effort. He recalls that his assistant Nicky Kaidor "in a mood of tense excitement" outlined the "preliminary and as it developed, accurate hypothesis" that the economic counterweight to the Nazi strategy was the inability or unwillingness of the German economy to mobilize the German economy for war. That was achieved to a large extent by Allied bombing which, by destroying civilian enterprises, released labour for the war effort. Hence the paradox that "as sources of raw materials were lost, territory diminished and, most of all, as bombing intensified, war production increased". From Galbraith's diaries of the period come mildly interesting portraits of top Nazi leaders, like Albert Speer. Soon he was off to Japan to assess the effect of aerial destruction there. "All I felt was the vast suffering visited on innocent people by their disastrous leaders and by unnecessary actions on our side." In 1946, he returned to Washington "to have charge of economic affairs in Germany and Japan and, rather as an afterthought, in Austria and South Korea". Service on a further commission, in 1950, on relief of German refugees planted the conviction that migrations were the key to the solution of the world's poverty problem; a curious vestige of belief in the efficacy of market forces. In between Galbraith had served as a feature writer on Henry Luce's *Fortune* magazine, where he learnt about corporations and perfected his style, and had been appointed a full professor at Harvard, over the strenuous opposition of Gottfried Haberler and several of the Overseas. (He got his revenge years later when, in a speech, he attributed Austria's post-war economic success to the flight to the United States of distinguished economists of the Austrian School.)

Even academics need time off from political duty. Galbraith campaigned enthusiastically for Adlai Stevenson in 1952. Eisenhower won. Galbraith comments, "I had come to think of myself as part of a permanent government. I was now out of office." Despite active service on various Democratic committees (including the Finletter Group set up in 1953 to teach Adlai Keynesian economics) and in Stevenson's election campaign of 1956, Galbraith used his enforced leisure to produce his most important writings. He de-

## A Winter's Tale

Below the padlocked pier somebody's dog  
Yaps at the sea. Further along the beach  
Two boys chuck pebbles past a floating log  
To nudge it nearer, but a strong ebb-tide  
Carries it out to where they cannot reach  
(Symbolic stuff - somebody could have died?)  
Well, to continue. On a summer day  
The promenade attracts both young and old  
With things to see or eat or take away,  
Anglers and water-wings and Thayer's ice-cream,  
And shelter should the day turn wet or cold.  
(Goodbye to all that this year, it would seem.)  
O. K. so far? A steepish cliff road leads  
Up to "St. Blund's", blessed with ocean views.  
Visitors come and go, and Sister reads  
The *Western Mail*, waiting for her relief.  
Someone turns on the television news  
Down in the lounge. (Must it go on, good grief?)  
Up in his ward the old man does not hear.  
His mind is drifting, he is out of range  
Of hits of gossip tossed by near and dear  
To bring him closer. Now there is no doubt  
About the end, and yet the end is strange.  
(The thing you see is never quite worked out.)  
Was the old lifeboat Faith standing off shore  
For a safe passage to another place?  
God knows what that means. Grant him (lets or more)  
Old hymns, old friends, summers laid down like wine,  
And turning in to touch another's face,  
Sleepily tell the warm heads of her spiole.

Jonathan Price



liberally reached for the widest possible audience, thereby earning the approbation of fellow academics for whom the best of social scholarship is a minute readership. Since his exposure to the writings of Chamberlain and Joan Robinson in the 1930s, his practical experience as Commissioner of Prices in the war (where he had discovered that a few large firms controlled dominant sectors of the American economy), and his study of corporations while writing for *Fortune*, Galbraith had convinced himself that the notion of self-adjusting markets was a figment of the neo-classical imagination. Self-regulation was achieved in practice, he argued in *American Capitalism* (1952), not through competitive markets, but through "countervailing power." Corporate power subordinated the existence of the countervailing power of trade unions, consumer co-operatives, chain-stores, government. Power was checked by power. This simultaneous refutation of Marx and Marshall owed little to economic theory, much to the characteristic American political theory of pluralism. The book had a big influence on the English social democrats Anthony Crosland and John Strachey, both trying to wean the Labour Party away from dogmatic commitment to wholesale nationalization. Many Galbraith feels that "countervailing power" often does not emerge. Numerous groups — the ghetto young, the rural poor, textile workers, women clerical workers, many consumers — remain weak or helpless. Nor did Galbraith foresee collision between the centres of power — notably trade unions and corporations — in pushing up prices. "One can survive orthodox criticism without harm; the great march of history is a more relentless thing."

*American Capitalism* had a fairly wide readership. But it was *The Affluent Society* (1958) which launched Galbraith on his career as best-selling author. The adjective itself, as well as the phrase "the conventional wisdom," became part of the radical chic of the decade. The idea of the book was not as new as Galbraith thinks. There would soon come a time, Keynes had argued in 1930, when society would have to accommodate its psychology and social structure to plenty, not scarcity. Galbraith simply said this time had arrived, at least in the United States. The advanced capitalist world, instead of keeping the industrial machine growing by constantly creating new material wants through advertising, the time had come to pay attention to the quality of life — the environment in which people lived, the creative use of leisure. This readjustment would require a different "social balance" between private and public outlays. Galbraith feels now that he greatly underestimated the "public costs of congested existence in the modern metropolis." *The Affluent Society* undoubtedly captured a mood in both America and Britain. The premise of prosperity became the starting-point of the American theorists of counter-culture in the 1960s: Marcuse, Rorty, Charles Reich. Children of plenty revolted against the "surplus repression" which turned them into corporate executives. In Britain, the book's message was used to dignify industrial decline. Britain's poor economic growth, it was fashionable to suggest, had less to do with obsolete machinery, poor labour relations, low expectations, than with a mature concern for civilized values. However, prophets of the imminent arrival of the stationary state have had a poor track record in prediction, and Galbraith seems to be no exception. There are too many poor still left; and the rich are too greedy.

Galbraith's fertile decade of enforced rest from government service culminated in his third major book, *The New Industrial State*, largely written in the late 1950s, though not published till 1967. This is his most ambitious, and systematic, attempt to describe contemporary capitalism as it is, rather than as reformers say it should be, or as it is depicted in textbook models of perfect or imperfect competition. The imperatives of technology, Galbraith argued, had replaced the competitive market system of small firms owned by profit-maximizing entrepreneurs by private planning system controlled by a

few great corporations and by "techno-structures" of managers who identified with the survival, growth, and prestige of their corporation. The greater the technical input into an economic enterprise the greater is the gestation period and the higher the costs of failure. Hence arises the need of the enterprise to control its own destiny. Specifically, prices, incentive costs, consumer preferences, and state policy have to be controlled or managed to eliminate uncertainty. This need to secure control over the environment dictates a growth of size unrelated to the original technical rationale; thus the 500 largest corporations produced nearly half of all the goods and services available in the United States. More impressive than Galbraith's detailed argument was his vision of the modern economy as a set of interlocking security systems radiating out from the large corporations to control, on the one hand, their suppliers and customers, and on the other, the state. The distinction between micro-economics and macroeconomics was abolished. As Galbraith here puts it:

The modern management of aggregate demand in the economy... no longer appeared as a unique act of innovation in economic policy. Rather, it was part of the public accommodation to the needs of corporate planning. It was made necessary by the instability now inherent in the relative rigidity of corporate prices and wages and the large investment discretion now inherent in corporate decision. Management of aggregate demand sought to prevent the gross fluctuations in sales against which no individual corporation could plan. Thus it added another dimension of security to corporate planning.

Galbraith's picture of American capitalism has been subjected to incisive criticism, economic as well as political. The imperatives of technology, it is said, do not necessarily dictate an increase in the size of firms. Technical change may favour products made by relatively small firms; or, rather, more flexible firms may be readier to innovate than the giants. The statistical evidence for increasing concentration has been disputed. Even today, firms with fewer than 500 workers employ nearly 60 per cent of the American work force. Galbraith himself was moved to redress the balance of his account in a later book, *Economics and the Public Purpose* (1972), which sought to explain the survival and resilience of the "market sector" of modern economies. A second type of criticism, which to some extent applies to all Galbraith's "popular" books, is that his analytical approach is insufficiently historical, descriptive, or theoretical, to yield adequate generalization. For a European reader, his work focuses rather paradoxically on the American experience. Take, for example, his view that Keynesian policy is to be seen as an accommodation by the state to the needs of corporate planning. How well does this fit the British case? Finally, Galbraith has been attacked from both sides of the political spectrum — a comfortable position to be in. A point often made by economic liberals is that international competition coupled with trust-busting can be used to keep domestic economies sufficiently competitive and efficiently unplanned. To the extent that monopoly conditions have nevertheless developed this is a result of state policy, not technological imperatives; policy which can be reversed. Galbraith himself accepts an opposite view: that the public must rely for the assertion of the public interest. The state, however, is extensively under the control of corporate power. So how is the public interest to be secured? Galbraith admits he "faced but did not resolve" this contradiction.

It was in the 1960s that the statist liberals came into their political inheritance in both the United States and Britain — only to fitter it away with astonishing speed. The experience was strikingly similar in both countries: the surge of the statist tide after the eight "wasted" years of Eisenhower and the thirteen "wasted" years of Tory rule; the high promise of economic and political



This photograph of Princess Juliana and Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands during a broadcast to the Dutch people on their wedding day (1937), is taken from Dr. Etich Salmou (1886-1944): *Aus dem Leben eines Fotografen*, by Els Harms and W. H. Rosbol, published by Schirmer/Mosel, Munich, (80pp., 32217585). Etich Salmou, who made his name as the official photographer to the Weimar Republic, emigrated to Holland in 1933. Many of his best known portraits of statesmen such as Laval, Hoover and Anthony Eden, and exiled heads of state — Italian Fascist ex-King Alfonso XIII of Spain — were taken in the 1930s. He died in Auschwitz in 1944.

management reinvigorated with a new sense of public purpose to which both Kennedy and Wilson gave eloquent expression; the echoes of New Deal vigour and commitment; the influx of economists and planners to Washington and Whitehall; the new programmes, agencies, and ministries; and then the débâcles of the late 1960s and early 1970s from which the Western world has never really recovered: Vietnam, the collapse of the Bretton Woods system, the OPEC price-rise; urban and suburban riots, the wages-explosion, Watergate. To be sure there were achievements as well; and it would be absurd to blame the statist liberals for all the disasters. Jack and Robert Kennedy, and Martin Luther King, were murdered; and Nixon made his own unique and considerable contribution to the disgrace of the Presidency. Yet was it not Arthur Schlesinger, one of the leading liberals of the Galbraith generation, who pointed out with painful lucidity that Watergate was in a certain sense a culmination of a process of accretion of Presidential power inaugurated by FDR, promoted by Kennedy and Johnson, and enthusiastically supported by the liberal establishment? And can the domestic and foreign disorders which brought the liberal decade to such a messy close really be separated from the

attempt of democratic governments, under liberal guidance, to do too much for the prevailing conditions of consent?

In this débâcle of liberal hopes, Galbraith, at least, played a fairly minor, and honourable, part. Deserving the twice-defeated Adlai Stevenson, he had campaigned vigorously for John F. Kennedy in 1960; his reward was the Ambassadorship to India, which he describes, with commendable candour, as an enjoyable interlude of disguised unemployment. Back in the United States in 1963, he was gradually drawn into what he describes as "careful disloyalty" over the escalating Vietnam War. In 1961, he had urged what amounted to the replacement of the corrupt Diem by a more effective anti-Communist — a line in harmony with Administration thinking. By 1966, he was calling for an "enclave policy". In 1967 he abandoned inside for outside persuasion. As chairman of the Americans for Democratic Action he campaigned vigorously on a platform of immediate negotiations, and supported Eugene McCarthy as the anti-war candidate for the Democratic nomination. Galbraith's policy was not heroic. "There was need to have a solution that was... acceptable to the largest possible political constituency in our own

country. Simply to leave was not." There was another motive: the desire to protect the South Vietnamese loyalists. "We cannot simply write them off; even by majority vote we do not assign people to the sanguinary attentions of their enemies." Unhappily wrong — democracies do it the whole time. He showed considerable courage, too, in facing thousands of angry students in Los Angeles the day Martin Luther King was killed.

Galbraith's star shone brightest in the 1950s. By the 1970s his place as the West's favourite guru had been taken by Milton Friedman, the apostle of monetarism, who voiced the new mood of disenchantment with big government. Disillusion with the results of monetarism is already setting in; in the 1980s we may expect new puppets of hope and despair to rise and fall in ever more rapid succession. The truth is that, inadequate as it was, there is no viable democratic alternative to the vision of the statist liberals — at least in the mature capitalist states. Thatcherism is too divisive, Reaganism too claustrophobic. Intelligence, style, humanity, wit — these were the values Galbraith stood for. They may not be enough to win a better world; but they are necessary ingredients of one.

## On the side of the angels

By Don Cupitt

JOHN A. T. ROBINSON:  
*The Roots of a Radical*  
168pp. SCM Press. £5.50.  
0 334 02321 1

Prolific writers are like economical housewives who abhor waste, and they need no encouragement to "gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." John Robinson collected his fragments from the 1950s in *On Being the Church in the World* (1964) and from the 1960s in *Christian Freedom in a Permissive Society* (1970). Now in this 1981 collection he returns to his roots and reminds anyone who does not realize it already what a profoundly traditional Anglican he is and has always been. The vulgar media image of him as a "rebel" is entirely mistaken: the reality is rather that he is a Canterbury, a son of the high Victorian clergy, and blessed with one of the largest and most splendid collections of uncles and aunts on record. Several of the brothers read Theology at Cambridge in the 1870s in the great

days of Westcott, Lightfoot and Hort; and a tribute to Lightfoot is included in this volume. From this Victorian background John Robinson inherits his liberality, his capacity for new enthusiasms, his conviction that the Church exists not for its own sake but for the sake of the world outside, and his dislike of any kind of wall-in sectarian mentality. In the old tradition of the "middle way" he avoids both biblical fundamentalism and ecclesiastical absolutism, holding that one should be firmly rooted in a few central values, commitments and doctrinal themes, while being open and exploratory at the edges.

The Victorianism shows itself particularly clearly in his attitude to sexual ethics. As soon as he encounters it, he wants to attack "the peculiar viciousness which our society — sometimes represented by the magisterate — reserves for sexual aberrations and deviations", and this collection includes an excellent piece on *The Place of Love in the Field of Sex*, in which he argues for various highly unpopular reforms. The ruminating imprudence with which he follows his conscience and takes the side of the scapegoat has nothing to do with the

The English-speaking academic world owes many debts to the Dutch, but I suspect that the conventional image of Dutch scholarship owes more to Beachcomber than to reality. Dr Strabismus of Utrecht whom God preserve, is indeed preserved in one of two places, but you are more likely to find him in retirement, pruning his roses and lamenting the upheavals of 1968, than at the cutting edge of scholarship. His strong sense of continuity with the past is not shared by many of his younger colleagues. There are some unbroken threads, of course. Take the two older universities, for instance: in Groningen there is a continuing tradition of northern independence such as you might find in Scotland or northern England; but it is no longer combined with the calm — I am going by hearsay — of the days before unbridled university expansion. In Leyden there is talk of the preservation of old intellectual standards, of the need for democracy to preserve the well-qualified professoriate that made it famous, and so forth. In other places (notably Leiden) a less dangerous conservatism is at work: it runs as deep as it once did.

There are in the Netherlands eight universities and thirteen institutions of comparable standing (give or take one or two), so my own perspective can hardly be representative. As a university, Groningen might be said to have pretty well half the country to itself. A small country, densely populated? Those who believe it, whether they live in London, Los Angeles, or New Jersey, should visit the northern provinces, where land, water and sky are more conspicuous than people. There are places that Willrid of York, Willibrod, and Boniface might almost recognize. There are villages that have not changed much since John Locke visited them; but there it stops. The towns, like most Dutch towns and all Dutch universities, have suffered from a period of unrestrained development.

Oil, natural gas, the port of Rotterdam, electronics — these are the paymasters, in the last analysis, of the universities, even of those in the universities who most malign them. It is impossible to imagine the country without its commerce, but if Descartes was a keen observer of society in his adopted country then times have changed in some respects. He liked the place, he said, because "in the midst of a crowd of busy people, more careful of their own affairs than curious about those of others", he could live "solitary and retired as in the most remote deserts without being deprived of the commodities you will find in the biggest towns". Was he not mistaken, in thinking that the crowd was looking the other way? I am not so sure about curiosity, but the sense of community in the country as a whole is positively intense. Perhaps he just meant that strangers could be left out of the reckoning.

Most émigrés turn into pseudo-ethnographers in the end, and in the Netherlands they usually find Calvinism at the root of everything. (Dr Strabismus was naturally a Calvinist.) According to Calvin it is a part of the state's duty to promote piety — there are still political parties with this aim in view — as well as to remove gross inequalities from the material rewards of its members. No matter that he favoured an elected aristocracy; the Dutch tradition of survival through cooperation — as when damming themselves so they could be saved, as Hood has it — has always been favourable to the broad principle of democracy. What is understood by that word is another matter. Today it is the broad principle that counts, and the broad principle can encompass on the one hand a Vice-Chancellor pleading that "elitism is a part of democracy" and on the other a widespread belief that all significant academic actions must be sanctioned by some or other committee. The word "democracy", like the word "society", is used with such abandon here that it has become as

meaningless as the "ours faithfully" at the end of a letter.

It is hard to say whether there is any hidden purpose behind the complex committee structure to be found at every level and in every part of the Dutch university system. (There is a common element in all present university experience here inasmuch as we are all state universities, with the same structure imposed by law.) So far, as we know, Dutch work for idle hands, and committees at least give a semblance of full employment. (Did William the Silent ever sit down for six or seven hours at a stretch?) The deeper purpose, if ever there was one, seems to have been of limiting professorial power, once of overwhelming importance, by including on almost all committees students and ancillary staff, as well as academic staff.

Looking back only as far as the great European watershed of 1948, it is easy to forget the extraordinary growth of the universities in the previous decade. Groningen is a town of the same size as Oxford, but in 1948 its university had only about half as many students. In 1970 it had nearly twice as many. It seems that at first there was general enthusiasm — with money for new appointments, new facilities, and large-scale international cooperation. But something had to go. Standards are falling, said the diarches, fixing their attention on entry numbers. But standards have not fallen far enough to prevent a very high proportion of the student body from failing to stay the course; and it seems to me that a more palpable decline was in the teaching body itself, much of it recruited in great haste, until very recently, moreover, we really must dispense with bogus objectivity! I thought we had inviolable tenure. A land of milk and honey, to quote Descartes again — although being an exact sort of person, he added that there was more of the first than the second.

In 1970 came a new law governing the universities. The WUB, as it is known in this land of acronyms, was a munificent piece of legislation completely restructuring, and in particular "democratizing", higher education. The cynics have it that the socialist government of the day bought a degree of professional silence by colossal salary increases. The freebooters — a good Dutch word, that — who came from outside the country were nothing new to the Dutch experience, and have not done the system any obvious harm. (Seven out of the first thirteen philosophy professors here in Groningen were foreigners, including the very first, in 1614, William Macdowell of St Andrews. He was rather good at solving international disputes over fishing rights, but I had better stick to my point.) The salaries seem to have arrived almost by accident, or by principle, it was the principle of equality among civil servants. Perhaps the luxuriant growth in the committee structure of the universities was nourished from that same source. At all events, the sooner it is cut back, the better. I have heard that Polish university efficiency improved noticeably after a main national paper-mill was destroyed by fire, and I doubt whether democracy took a turn for the worse when committees were deprived of their principal diet. Even the most optimistic of those Marxist students who provide the hard professional core of the committees are obliged to admit in the end that they are often defeated by the amateush cunning of the old boros. But they probably consider the social side of committee life compensation enough. Take another look at Rembrandt's "De Staathmeesters" [The Syndics], and you will begin to understand.

A pointless confrontation is as much of a tragedy as the accompanying sacrifice of forests, when the debate is empty, and when it might have been replaced by a colloquium on Fermat's last theorem, or whatever. The struggle for supremacy, however, is at least three-cornered.

There you have an almost sacred principle of Dutch life. The Dutch take their principles more seriously than even the English used to do, and the principle now at issue is that there shall be no hills and valleys in the human landscape. It's only an ideal, thank heavens. There are clearly many who want to be thought intrinsically superior to their fellows, but they have a distinctly guilty look about them. I don't know whether this is good for the psyche, but it certainly puts the struggle at its core. I know of Germans who come here simply to shake off the restraints in their lives. A French acquaintance recently caused general mirth in an Amsterdam café when, in a loud voice, he declared his inability to understand the spending habits of one of the wealthiest peoples of Europe. "How do they spend their wealth? On blue-jeans, bread rolls, and bicycles!" Without realizing it, he had not only rather closely echoed the words of a seventeenth-century French traveller to the same city, but he had paid his hosts a great compliment. It might not have gone down so well in the small diplomatic corridors of The Hague, but even there you will find those whose self-image is of a countryman on his bike, heading off into the wind and rain to join in the mending of the dike. A romantic substitute, perhaps, for the lightning individualism shown on some of the motorways in the west of the country, but a symptom of the greater urge to be egalitarian. Rigorously translated into educational terms, this would produce antipodes to the British educational world, where effortless superiority takes the highest prizes. But as I say, it is only a romantic ideal, and it has defeated the politicians.

## Comparative Studies in Overseas History

Publications of the Leiden Centre for the History of European Expansion

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LEONARD BLUSSE and FEMME GAASTRA  
Centre for the History of European Expansion, University of Leiden, The Netherlands  
1981, 272 pp.  
Cloth Dfl. 65.00/US\$ 44.00 ISBN 90-6021-473-0

This book, the third volume in the series 'Comparative Studies in Overseas History', contains a number of essays about the function of the great Companies of Trade in the European Expansion in Asia and the Atlantic world during the 17th and 18th centuries. Nowadays it is generally recognized that the Companies played a crucial role in the opening of new markets and the widening of the economic boundaries of the world of the *ancien régime*. The central question of this book is how the Companies actually achieved these things. Was it because of their organization, their relations with the state, their trade-policy, or because of their ability to make use of the economic potentialities in the overseas world? In order to answer these questions, the editors argue that in such a comparative study the Companies should be seen against the background of the social political and economical system of the regions that comprised their theatre of action.

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early Van der Meer, for example, was the place in connection with the Royal Dutch Shell, or the history of the Golden Age of Dutch empire, except when you are comparing those institutions, and then it is acceptable.

An Englishman abroad shudders when he hears another Dutchman seeing another Dutchman in the night. Perhaps it has something to do with belonging to a small country with a minority language; it is certainly not a symptom of a narrow nationalism, for this world hardly is compatible with what must be the world's highest standard in universal practical language teaching. Ironically, this makes the Dutch perhaps too receptive to outside ideas, too much of the translator. (Of course it helps the balance of trade along very nicely.) As a philosophical custom, once said to me, "This is not a country, it is a cross-section." Before the war the strongest intellectual liaisons were with Germany; after the dissolution of invasion, contacts were found wherever possible elsewhere. Since in place of Heidelberg and so forth, all according to subject and taste, this academic shift can hardly explain, though, the lack of punch in the average Dutchman in his national language, especially the written language. In three or four years, a British or American undergraduate will typically write between five and thirty times as much as a Dutch student in twice the time. Dutch examinations are very often only oral, at least in the arts. It is ironic that, as anthropologists will one day discover — one of the great publishing nations of the world should have produced a speech culture rather than a script culture.

To descend the hierarchy of communities, with due attention to detail, would be to write the *Dutch Comedy* backwards. The churches alone would require an encyclopedia.

## Slowly but surely

By M. J. Wintle

R. T. GRIFFITHS

*Industrial Retardation in the Netherlands 1830-1880*  
235pp. The Hague: Nijhoff, 90 247 21997

Achterlijk, Achter of Anders?  
Aspecten van de Economische Ontwikkeling van Nederland in de 19de Eeuw  
40pp. Amsterdam: The Free University, 90 6256 431 3

When writing in English, R. T. Griffiths has a frank, approachable style, and an honesty of expression which makes his monograph on the Dutch economy from 1830 to 1880 a pleasing addition to the important works produced by foreign scholars on the history of the Netherlands. The book began life as a Cambridge Ph.D. thesis under the supervision of Charles Wilson, and it is refreshing to find a dissertation making a successful transition to a published work with so little revision of the bulk of the text.

*Industrial Retardation* was written from well outside the Dutch historical establishment's stockade, but since then Griffiths has moved to Holland and *Achterlijk, Achter of Anders?* commemorates his appointment as Professor of Socio-Economic History at the Free University of Amsterdam. This would suggest that he calls for a revision of the Dutch view of the nineteenth-century historical process in that country have not been entirely rejected.

The monograph is most thoroughly researched; the notes are informative but compact; the tables and figures clear and uncomplicated. It is, however, marred by inaccurate printing (more than fifty errors, at a rough count), and by the infuriating omission of an index. Griffiths has a talent for summarizing a complex situation, whether it is based on his wide secondary reading, or on his own vigorous research into various public and private archives. The in-

and the political parties likewise. ("Telecom," "Telecomings," "Telecoms") would have a very long entry in both works.) There is even a verb, *verzelen* ("to pillage"), as one might say, meaning to divide up a country along religious and political lines. There are some who argue that the *verzelen* of the Netherlands is what makes the place so peaceful. At all events, the first requirement of life there is to learn to read regularly in politico-philosophical circles, preferably with an awareness of different nuances of usage by Marx and Mannheim. The Dutch Dutch Catholicism, that rare phenomenon, a best-seller written by bishops, is a very concrete example of the expression of an ideology in one sense or another, but not all spiritual authors are so tangible, so easily dropped and raised. In the universities, the most easily visible formula accorded ritual respect is that of Marxism. It is unnecessary to mention its subdivisions, some of them adapted to the needs of members, laymen and otherwise, of the various churches. It is worth adding that it is related to German university Marxism somewhat as Robin Hood is related to Lenin. The Dutch are in many ways very tolerant, and generally allow foreigners several years to discover their true ideology, in the meantime issuing a temporary identity. For Englishmen, for instance, regardless of previous affiliations, the temporary ID reads "naïve laissez-faire liberal." There is a temptation to transfer to "Dutch liberal intellectual," which involves walking a small dog on a long leash, or voting for your political opponents; but on the whole you will be judged more favourably if you join some oppressed minority group.

It is an abiding Dutch vice to import ideologies into places where they have no relevance, but this is almost excusable in terms of the

highest of all Dutch principles, that of *gezelligheid*. This is that urge all to unite in doing to do with long chains) for the sake of association, rather than of the final outcome pointed out on your banner. As for the word itself, after three or four years you might get a grudging acknowledgment that you are pronouncing it correctly, but never that it is translatable. It signifies a blend of conviviality and well-being, and something else, indefinable, but redolent of heavy ornamental brass chandeliers, Japanese plants, coffee, cigars, and open curtains. You can sense it in Rembrandt's "Night Watch," which depicts none of these things. There are intellectuals in Holland, especially those influenced by cold winds from England, who would treacherously dismiss the principle, but they are not truly Dutch. The new university buildings, functional and unimaginative — as in most parts of the New Europe — are at first sight entirely lacking in *gezelligheid*, but in fact it is ever present there in the consciousness of those who know their ideologies. The abstract quality which cannot be put into words has nothing to do with *gezelligheid*.

The deep suspicion with which old-style scholarly individualism is regarded varies from subject to subject, of course. Despite the discovery, as announced in a recent disquisition by a Leiden sociologist, that the public is tired of being interviewed, it remains easier for a group to draft a questionnaire than to prove a theorem of metamathematics. Those who work in the group are generally accorded the palm, morally and otherwise. There are scores of mythical working parties set up at a national level purely and simply to guarantee success when applying for funds. As for morality, this is a country where it is singularly easy to feel permanently guilty, especially when one is not quite sure

what ideological precepts are hovering in the background. Not everywhere in the world will you hear a scholar criticized for gaining unfair professional advantage by working longer than regulation hours. Where else do colleagues argue the impropriety of accepting money for a new library from a multi-national corporation? Not everywhere will you hear the advice, when applying for permission to visit a politically unwholesome country, that rather than give the intellectual advantages of the visit one should explain how one became reconciled to going only after wrestling with one's conscience. But if I dwell so long on morality, is this because I came from a place with so little of it? Or was it there taken more for granted?

Whatever the answer, it is likely that we shall soon witness in the universities the use of cruder negotiating techniques, more characteristic, shall we say, of the world of long the educational castle were too must be abolished over the country as a whole in the next four years, and with them say four or five times as many lectureships. At the very moment of writing I hear of comparable cuts in Britain, but it is noteworthy that as far as the *student* population is concerned, the British government has chosen to reduce numbers, rather than length of course. The elitist solution! Two Amsterdam lecturers in sociology have been dismissed for non-productivity — almost unthinkable a couple of years ago — and a threat has been extended to their close colleagues. Fashions are changing. There is still money for trendy new subjects, but all the fun has been taken out of the invention of new disciplines. The rules of the game are changing, but the various cogitates of the word "society" are still at a premium. It is easiest to illustrate the point with an example. We

might start from the TLS of June 12, and Peter Gay's all too modest "fitting of ideas into their lived context." As it stands, this simply won't do, but transfigured into "sociodynamics of ideas" or "socio-cognitive interaction theory" it might just catch the eye of the next minister, and more importantly his imagination. It is a serious business, even of desperation, for some.

Serious too is the shortage of time for research, and things are going to get worse rather than better. The situation might surely be partially remedied by braver university terms. Dare I suggest an experiment with just one little university? Alas, to do so would be to violate the principle that all state universities are created equal. There is, with this philosophy, little room for any but internal manœuvre, and even then, one part of the tragedy is that those most capable of restructuring the universities along the necessary lines are so ex-hausted by faculty councils and the like — whose motto seems to be that it is better to travel hopefully than to arrive — that they don't want to hear about any change. And yet, despite it all, there are many excellent corners in Dutch science and Dutch scholarship. The Dutch themselves, of course, will never admit as much; but for an indication of the lines along which their academic thought runs, there are the regular official publications of the ZWO (The Hague, in English; abstracts of research projects listed by subject and institution). These are essentially lists of promises, not all of which will be kept; but the promises, at least, are convincing, and the titles strikingly conservative, where fashions could have made them otherwise. And the liberal sprinkling of foreign names — sometimes hardly visible under a veneer of Dutch orthography — suggests that this is a country with a tradition of generosity to its immigrants.

This indicates two possible explanations for the relative obscurity of two of the greatest of Dutch poets. The first is the advanced level of language competence in Holland, which is sufficient to prompt school-leavers to take up foreign authors, in translation if not in the original; and this tends to induce in them a cosmopolitan taste at the expense of their native literature. The second explanation, by no means limited to the Netherlands but more persistent there than in Britain, is the understandable preference of readers for literature in a contemporary idiom. Indeed, a remarkable phenomenon of the 1970s in Holland was the box-office draw of poetry-reading evenings, when living poets attracted pop-concert-sized crowds of younger people. When compared with the non-event of the celebrations of Vondel's centenary two years ago, or the solemnities in Hooft's honour this year, there is something of an implied protest in these popular manifestations. Certainly the celebrated effects of a tradition of internationalism in Dutch culture, together with a growing post-war anti-nationalism, indicate a general suspicion of national history and of the authority of historians.

If, then, there is a prevailing suspicion that literary historians are merely self-perpetuating coteries of myopic philologists and critics, they will never persuade people to turn back to writers such as Vondel and Hooft. The difficulties can hardly be underrated. The comparison sometimes drawn between Vondel and Shakespeare is facile and absurd. They were both dramatists who took their time, but that all, if *Sansone's* *Agonistes* had been only one of many such works written by Milton on Biblical themes, or if Vondel had written more than one, unfinished epic, a comparison between Vondel and Milton would be more appropriate. Hooft can scarcely be compared with the Silver Poets, since his affinities lie rather with the Italians, Petrarch, Tasso and Guarini. He, like Vondel, has his medieval and neo-Latin antecedents, and both poets were members of a unique Dutch institution, the Chambers of Rhetoric. These Chambers had their origin in the medieval Guilds, initially life insurance co-operatives which became centres of artistic activity providing suitable ceremony and entertainment at local (and ultimately national) festivals throughout the

mid-century change for far too long, deceptively reinforced as these are by the harvest failures and the social problems of the middle and late 1840s. This attempt at demythologizing is most welcome, and echoes the work done in the field of political and ideological history by J. C. Boogman and C. H. E. de Wit, who have shown that the traditional idea of a sudden liberal takeover in 1848 is probably incorrect, and that liberal forces had been active and indeed influential for some time before that.

It is not possible, or desirable, to decide whether Griffiths is either right or wrong; the evidence is not yet available. Two areas cry out for more research. On a national scale, Dutch economic historians desperately need long and reliable series of production figures, GNP, growth rates, and the like. At the same time, we need to know what was happening in the localities: such aggregate figures as do exist are highly suspect. Griffiths adds a valuable appendix to his monograph about the location of the Provincial Governors' reports to the King for the years 1824-49, claiming that they are "by far the best source of information on the annual progress of industry in each province." They may be quite full for industry, but for the other economic sectors (or, for that matter, social and political issues) the researcher can and must dig deeper, using the archives of the provincial governments themselves, and not just their often somewhat loaded official reports to authority. Already some good local agricultural studies have appeared, but the data which Griffiths needs to prove his contentions about industry, trade, shipping and the services are still covered in dust. One hopes that the Dutch university system, which can lend itself so well to co-ordinated research projects with large-scale student participation, will continue to yield results in this field.

Griffiths's presence in Amsterdam, together with the publication of this stimulating and readable book, is likely to provide fresh impetus for the necessary research into this most unusual of small nations, and for the reassessment of ideas about past economic development in general.

## Commemorating Vondel and Hooft

By Peter King

The recent anniversaries of the Dutch poets, Joost van den Vondel (1587-1679) and Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft (1581-1647), raise a number of sociological questions. To start with: why? Do we commemorate "the lights of the world in their several generations" out of piety, conviction, propriety, conceit? Or are there perhaps less altruistic motives — commercial interests in a "revival" of author interests in getting into print? For Vondel and Hooft we can, regrettably, entirely rule out the possibility of a publisher's bonanza. And this raises a further set of questions. A light only needs reviving if it is dimmed or extinguished. So an act of piety, or whatever, is apparently necessary in order to sustain or revive the greatness of the great. On the face of it this is a paradox demanding an honest answer from the literary historian.

Because literature is less immediately necessary than other art forms, there can be a divide between the specialist and the public, or the teacher and his class. But Milton and Donne are still read for pleasure (as well as study) by English readers of some education. Dante (and Chaucer come to that) are even harder to grasp, but they are genuine household names in a number of households. Education in the humanities in the Netherlands is in no way inferior to that in Britain; on the contrary, modern literature shows far higher per capita sales there than here, to which must be added a considerable trade in contemporary writing in English, German and French and in Dutch translation.

This indicates two possible explanations for the relative obscurity of two of the greatest of Dutch poets. The first is the advanced level of language competence in Holland, which is sufficient to prompt school-leavers to take up foreign authors, in translation if not in the original; and this tends to induce in them a cosmopolitan taste at the expense of their native literature. The second explanation, by no means limited to the Netherlands but more persistent there than in Britain, is the understandable preference of readers for literature in a contemporary idiom. Indeed, a remarkable phenomenon of the 1970s in Holland was the box-office draw of poetry-reading evenings, when living poets attracted pop-concert-sized crowds of younger people. When compared with the non-event of the celebrations of Vondel's centenary two years ago, or the solemnities in Hooft's honour this year, there is something of an implied protest in these popular manifestations. Certainly the celebrated effects of a tradition of internationalism in Dutch culture, together with a growing post-war anti-nationalism, indicate a general suspicion of national history and of the authority of historians.

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Low Countries. What the members of these Chambers wrote was written anonymously for the glory of the Chamber. Only as the Renaissance concept of the personal Muse emerged did anonymity yield to code-names and finally to signatures.

The linguistic complexities of texts which show a rapid development towards a standardized language, incorporating a new Latin-based lexicon and syntax; the influence of classical models and themes; the theological and discursive subject-matter of Vondel; the Italianate *conceit* and

object in an exhibition-case. It has become a curiosity, a part of history. There is, on the face of it, no justification for this. But Vondel's recent fine production of *Broeders' Spouse* (1617) is a model of what can be done to stage an early tragedy for modern audiences. Vondel would assuredly present problems of staging, because of the static and specifically theological nature of his best tragedies, but the recent, and very sporadic, performances of his plays show little or no real attempt to convey the vitality

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by two very different publications. Marijke Spies and a group working at the Institute of Dutch Literature at Amsterdam University compiled *Vondel en Amsterdam. Vondel's gedicht 'De invulling van 't Stadhuys' (Amsterdam) in beeld gebracht*. This was produced in conjunction with an exhibition arranged by the authors in the Theatermuseum in Amsterdam in the spring of 1979, and provides a richly illustrated commentary on the exhibit. Even more important than its historical and architectural interest are the iconographical references, illustrating an aspect of Vondel's poetry that is too often ignored. This is clearly a student's book, on a student's topic, though the incongruous comic-strip tacked on to the end suggests a nice attempt to reach a more general market.

The other Vondel publications are unashamedly written for the specialist. One contains the contributions to a colloquium at Leuven on the theme of his occasional poetry, with the title *Vondel's 'Lied' bij gelegenheid*. 1679-1679, with contributions by L. Roosse and K. Portemans (the editors), J. Becker, M. Spies, L. Reus and M. Janssens. *Visies op Vondel na 300 jaar* contains essays by sixteen scholars on a wide range of topics, six on drama and theatre, four on individual poems, and others on his epigrammatic, Vondel and Broeders, Vondel, Virgil and astronomy; Vondel's essay on poetry; the classical-romantic antithesis; and Vondel in French translation.

Hooft, too, was honoured with two collections of essays, both ranging as widely as the interests of the contributors. *Studies over Hooft 'De Liefde' geschreven, 1581-1981* includes among several essays on his lyric poetry an important contribution from T. Tymoczko on "De Const van Rhetorica en Hooft's vroege poëzie"; contributions on Hooft and Heinsius, and Hooft and Huygens; five essays on Hooft's plays, one on his *Heinric de Grote* and two on his *Nederlandsche Historie*.

The second collection of essays, *Hooft*, is remarkable for the polemical attack on Hooft delivered by Jan van Dorsten and challenged by L. Strenght who, with M. A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen and P. E. L. Verkuyl, is also responsible for a new anthology of Hooft's poetry, *Overloed van Vondel*. This collection is evidently intended to offer not just a larger selection but to present it in a manner unlike existing school and student texts. There are no footnotes; the spelling, and even the vocabulary on occasion, is modernized. Historical and lexical commentary (sometimes simply in the form of a free prose rendering) is provided at the back.

The compilers admit that modernization of this kind has its problems, and caught as we are in the cross-fire between the Crummies and the modernists in our own debates about the Pryer Book, or as the Dutch and the Flemings are in their disputes on spelling reforms (which are introduced by Acts of Parliament), we shall doubtless be capable of defending our traditionalist or progressive point of view. But we cannot pretend that the question originally put simply does not exist. Should, in fact, the refinements of art be kept for the elite, or exposed to the gaze of the uninitiated in an intelligible form?

The Vondel centenary was marked by two Dutch poets, Joost van den Vondel (1587-1679) and Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft (1581-1647), raise a number of sociological questions. To start with: why? Do we commemorate "the lights of the world in their several generations" out of piety, conviction, propriety, conceit? Or are there perhaps less altruistic motives — commercial interests in a "revival" of author interests in getting into print? For Vondel and Hooft we can, regrettably, entirely rule out the possibility of a publisher's bonanza. And this raises a further set of questions. A light only needs reviving if it is dimmed or extinguished. So an act of piety, or whatever, is apparently necessary in order to sustain or revive the greatness of the great. On the face of it this is a paradox demanding an honest answer from the literary historian.

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## commentary

## The styles of 'De Stijl'

By Jane Beckett

Fifty years ago the Dutch journal *De Stijl* ceased publication on the death of its editor Theo Van Doesburg in March 1931. *De Stijl*, as both a movement and a journal, occupies a central, almost iconic place in the history of Modernism. The first issue of the journal, in October 1917, had proclaimed as one of its fundamental aims the dual job of the production of works of art and of a theory and critique arising from them. Most subsequent histories of modern art have accepted this duality, giving some account of the strict formal means of the painting and architecture of *De Stijl* as well as of the theory of Neoplasticism associated with it. Indeed by 1920 *De Stijl* was identified throughout Europe as the Dutch contribution to the theory and practice of geometric abstract art. The painting of Piet Mondrian, Bart van der Leek, Vilmos Huszar and Van Doesburg, the sculpture of Georges Vantongerloo, the poetry of Van Doesburg and Anthony Kok and the architecture of J. P. Oud, Robert Van 't Hoff and Jan Wils were given this collective title, derived from the name of the review.

The style – summed up by the aphoristic statement in the review: "The object of nature is man, the object of man is style" – was particularly associated with the geometric abstract canvases of the painters. These were constructed from black horizontal and vertical lines with some of the planes formed by the intersection of these lines filled exclusively with primary colour – red, yellow, blue – and with non-primary colour – black, grey, white. This "pure" restricted vocabulary was arrived at through a detailed, analytic process of abstraction from nature, in which the forms of the external subject were gradually replaced by the elements of plane and colour. Freed from a descriptive role, as in Mondrian's increasingly abstract drawings and oil sketches of the pier and sea at Domghuy, in these, as also in Van Doesburg's famous "Cow" series and Van der Leek's painting "Mare Triptych", all curved lines in the original subject are replaced by horizontal and vertical lines and all descriptive colour is replaced by primary colour.

The style was associated with Piet Mondrian's theory of Neoplasticism, of which the fundamental principles were suppression of individualism and the concept of universal harmony. Some of the preoccupations which underpin this theory, such as his interest in Theosophy, were not shared by the other contributors to the review. Nevertheless, the concept of spiritual liberation remained an essential component of much of the writing in *De Stijl* and can be compared with similar aspects of the writings of other early theorists of abstract painting, such as Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc. Moreover, Van Doesburg's interest in such preoccupations in the Dadaist movement led to his involvement in Dada, and to the seemingly paradoxical inclusion of Dadaist articles in *De Stijl* between 1920 and 1923.

By 1921, the main logo of the journal was the bold red capitalized initial letters NB, standing for *Nieuwe Beelding* (Neoplasticism) with the words *De Stijl* set across the initials. Here one of the main problems encountered in this field arises: the persistent identification of both the review and the associated artists with Mondrian's theory. For a short period at least this is correct, but in general it implies that Mondrian's work was more important than that of the other contributors, and further takes no account of the considerable changes in the review during its fourteen years of publication.

Even a cursory glance through the contents of the thirty issues published between 1917 and 1932 reveals

how provocatively *De Stijl* was engaged both in some of the major debates in the cultural life of Holland and the wider issues of the European modernist avant-garde. Various little magazines were produced in Holland between 1912 and 1930, and were a fundamental part of the cultural vitality of the Netherlands. They ranged from literary journals, such as *Het Geef* (The Tide), to those which discussed broader cultural issues in music, literature, painting and religion, such as *De Beweging* (The Movement) and *Realiteit* (Reality), to both of which Van Doesburg contributed. There were also lively weekly newspapers like *De Groene Amsterdammer* and *Holland Express* which carried articles on politics and current affairs as well as criticism of literature, music and art. *De Stijl*, like its exact contemporary the expressionist review *Wendigen*, belonged within this context, at least so long as it was edited from the Netherlands. The housing schemes in Rotterdam by J. J. P. Oud and in The Hague by Jan Wils, for example, were discussed in *De Stijl* and are closely connected with a wider discussion on housing policy within the Netherlands in the immediate post-war period.

*De Stijl*'s position as part of a European avant-garde was established in the first four years of its publication, when the paintings were reproduced (in black and white on poor grade paper) and the theory was published side by side with articles and reproductions of work by

other European artists – for example, Italian futurist and metaphysical painters and German and French abstract artists. *De Stijl* gave an enthusiastic description of the opening of the Bauhaus in Weimar in 1919, and the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, which had such a profound influence on the development of European Modern architecture, was also discussed in the journal.

In the first four years of publication it was therefore essentially a Dutch magazine which, like several of its contemporaries, also contained articles on European issues. But in the second stage of the review initiated by Van Doesburg's move to Germany it was within a European context that *De Stijl* had to compete. The first changes appeared in the format, and in the new typography of the early issues, with green or grey cover and expressionist heavy black type and layout, were replaced by white covers with bold, coloured upper-case letters and liberated typography, while the format was turned through forty-five degrees, so that the magazine was wider than it was tall. Apart from the issue devoted to Lisitsky's "Story Of Two Squares", colour was not used on inside pages, and it was never as glossy a production as its Dutch rival, *Wendigen*.

Changes in content were as radical as those in the printing. The theory of Neoplasticism was replaced, partly as a result of Mondrian's isolation

in Paris, by articles on Dada, on the importance of a unidirectional aesthetic in which the Dadaist conception of the machine as a social liberator predominated, and on the new architecture of *De Stijl* which grew from Van Doesburg's course held unofficially at the Bauhaus, and which Le Corbusier attacked with great vehemence in his review *L'Esprit Nouveau*. Finally, Van Doesburg introduced his theoretical revision of Neoplasticism – "Elementarism", in which the diagonal element replaced the horizontal and vertical and the idea of "the dynamic" was introduced into the concept of "harmony".

What is particularly interesting and revealing in this European period of *De Stijl* is that the majority of the articles published were still in Dutch. This suggests that to the editor, at least, the paper was a vehicle for the Dutch contribution to the growing discussion of geometric abstract painting and its synthesis with the other arts. However, the problem remained that unlike French, in which Le Corbusier published *L'Esprit Nouveau*, or German, in which Walter Hasencamp's *Der Dada* was published, Dutch is a far less accessible language – a fact acknowledged by Van Doesburg in the editor's preface to the issue in which the journal was founded, in which he wrote that the reason for his reprinting earlier articles in subsequent editions in either French or German. Very little was published in English although, significantly, this little included the founding manifesto of 1918 and Van Doesburg's article

on the death of Modernism. The paper also had an English correspondent for some time, Douglas Coldring, and Van Doesburg wrote admirably of *Ilust* and Wyndham Lewis's newest review *The Tyro*.

Only twelve numbers of the review were published between 1923 and 1928, compared with the fifty issues of the previous six years. The last one, edited by Van Doesburg, in Strasbourg, was entirely in French and German. But the changed contents of *De Stijl* during the 1920s vividly reveal many of the preoccupations of that decade. The current exploration of social and political reconstruction was carried on in general articles about the relevance of art and particularly the development of a theory of architecture which incorporated painting and was therefore a public rather than a private entity.

Although Van Doesburg was the nominal editor of the review, the egalitarian conception of the founder members in Holland was at least maintained until the mid 1920s. Certainly at the outset the collective experiences and interests of the contributors outweighed those of the editor. Changes in this situation were perhaps inevitable, particularly when the initial group dissolved and Van Doesburg moved away from Holland. And *De Stijl*'s demise in Van Doesburg's death suggests that it must chiefly have been his interest and vitality which kept it going.

## J. Pierpont Morgan

Sir, – As the unofficial chronicler of new books for the English-speaking world, will you grant me space to correct a serious misstatement in Andrew Sinclair's *Grosvenor: The Life of J. Pierpont Morgan* (London: Weidenfeld, 1979, 2 vols., £12.95). The error is on page 20, the italics being his:

Most damning of all, a facsimile of [Barker] Ketchum's account with Stevens, taken from the banker's evidence given to the House investigating committee, was reprinted without comment. Ketchum stated that not only did Morgan receive \$20,000 to settle his original loan, his commission, his expenses and interest, but also that a certain J.P.M. covered a further check for \$3,797 two days after Ketchum's first loan to Stevens.

This is ludicrous.

The \$3,797 item was for insurance, cartage, and shipping charges as well as a portion of the expenses of fitting out "Chandeleur" of 4,000 earthenware by the gunsmith Maxson – in short, additional expenses incurred by Morgan. Sinclair's "7% brokerage fee" is no lapse fabrication.

Morgan went with Stevens to Governor's Island to take possession of the arms, from which Sinclair concludes that there was no arm's length transaction. On the contrary Morgan's presence is evidence to show that he did not trust Stevens, that it was an arm's length transaction. Morgan did not introduce Stevens to Ketchum, though they knew each other well – additional evidence of a lack of trust. Morgan's part in the transaction was clear from the start. The Hall Carriage affair was investigated thoroughly many times over. No contemporary, no one for fifty years, criticized Morgan.

Sinclair fails to point out that the improvident sale of the arms took place before Morgan entered the scene, and any money he made came out of Stevens, not the government. It is good to see Sinclair reject the yarns of Gustavus Myers and his ilk, but this Englishman's novel version invented in 1981 is as bad.

R. GORDON WASSON.  
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## The Turner Bequest

Sir, – Lawrence Gowing (July 10) rightly argues that the Turner Bequest, now divided between three museums, should be reunited. He might have quoted James Smith, who wrote over a century ago: "It is the sum total that knocks you over. No landscape painter ever came near him as a whole."

Yet certain people at the British Museum have advanced all sorts of casual arguments for that museum keeping the watercolours and drawings in the Bequest, even though A. M. Hind, Keeper of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum 1933-45, wrote in the *British Museum Quarterly* in 1933 that the removal of these from the Tate to the British Museum in October 1931 on indefinite loan "was made largely on account of the lack of Students' Rooms at the National Gallery or the Tate Gallery". Now that the Tate proposes to build such a Students' Room, one might think the case for their return to the Tate was unanswerable.

Professor Gowing argues that the Trustees of the National Gallery, present ultimate owners of the watercolours and drawings, should decide to return them to the Tate, presumably even against the will of the British Museum. The reason why the National Gallery has not yet done this, a year and a half after the announcement of the plans to build a

Turner extension at the Tate, perhaps, owes something to the fact that the case for reuniting the Turner Bequest is equally an argument for the ownership of the paintings at the National Gallery by Turner to be transferred to the Tate, as, with the exception of the two paintings that Turner bequeathed specifically to the National Gallery, these too form an integral part of the Bequest. But the National Gallery has already refused to hand these over, though theoretically there would be no problem about ensuring that it had an adequate display of Turners, as works could be loaned back to it. But, as things stand, key works, such as "The Fighting Temeraire", which are an integral part of the Bequest, will be permanently denied to the display of the Bequest.

The Tate Gallery admittedly cannot put forward an argument for the transfer of both paintings and drawings to itself, as it has shown reluctance to part with its existing segment of the Bequest, when some people thought that a better "Turner's Gallery" might have been established at Somerset House than in the rather unimpressive wing of the Tate that is now planned.

Yet a former Director of the National Gallery, Sir Charles Eastlake, in 1855 admitted that the Bequest, while being made to his gallery's Trustees, was a gift to the Nation and its People. It is surely time that the Government legislated to provide for the Bequest to be reunited in one place and under one body of trustees, rather than continue to leave the matter to several dozen far distant trustees (of the National Gallery, British Museum and Tate), of whom probably the only one genuinely concerned about how Turner should be displayed, Professor Gowing, has now ceased to be of their number.

SELBY WHITTINGHAM.  
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## Ivan the Terrible

Sir, – Francis Carr (Letters, July 17) disagrees with my review of his book, *Ivan the Terrible*, on four counts:

(1) A word misquoted and another omitted from a quotation. It was certainly careless of me to write "theological" instead of "ideological", and to omit the word "monarchs". But neither of these two lapses makes any difference to Mr Carr's thesis and arguments or my objections to them. Indeed, the omission of the word "monarchs" effectively corrects Mr Carr's ambiguous phrasing, which seems to indicate Stalin among Russia's crowned heads.

(2) The Emperor Paul's Indian campaign. What campaign? It is true that in one of his bouts of semilunacy the freakish emperor once dispatched some Cossacks – without maps, provisions, equipment or plan of action – in the general direction of India to effect its "conquest". The order was, of course, soon countermanded and the Cossacks recalled before they had reached Russia's own frontiers, let alone those of countries bordering on India. (Central Asia did not then form part of the Russian Empire.) Since it would be discourteous to suggest that this is what Mr Carr refers to as "Paul's campaign against India", my question remains: What campaign?

(3) Etymology. My criticism of his etymology (and, hence of the interpretations based on it), says Mr Carr, "completely unfounded", and he advises me to consult a dictionary. By all means. Unfortunately, lack of space forces me to limit myself to three examples only.

(a) Ivan the Terrible. According to Mr Carr, "Ivan earned this description by the nature of the deaths of his many victims" (Mr Carr's emphasis) and not by the fear he inspired as a tyrant. In fact, however, the epithet "Terrible" is a mistranslation

sanctioned by general usage) of *gorozar*, meaning wrathful, threatening, awe-inspiring like a thunderstorm – *gorozar* or, rather, a blend of *gorozar* and *gorozar* (the Russian word for "fury", *gorozar*). Thus, the epithet refers to Ivan's personality as it does to Peter the Great's in Pushkin's *gorozar* (not) and not to the nature of his atrocities.

(b) *Samoyed*. Mr Carr endorses Samuel Collier's view that the Samoyed must be cannibals since *Samoyed* means "self-eater" in Russian. This is directly contradicted by the Russian encyclopaedia *Brockhaus i Efron*, Vol. 28, article entitled "Samoyed": "Their name is derived not from self-eating, i.e. cannibalism, but probably from *Samoyednnyy* – the name given by the Lapuri to their own country."

(c) *Onobdovitye*. Mr Carr translates this as "men with a court of law", explaining that these were people families so poor that they had "only one or two labourers" to cultivate their land for them. However, *Brockhaus i Efron*, Vol. 38, article: "Chevrenitsy Peasants" (alternative name *onobdovitye*, literally: single-farm men), defines the *onobdovitye* as lower-rank servicemen – Cossacks, private soldiers etc. – who, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were each granted by the Crown a farm (*dvor*) along the south-eastern frontier in return for defending a stretch of territory. *Dvor* has several meanings in Russian, including "farm" (or "homestead") and "court" (as of king). Mr Carr has confused the two and taken the prefix *odno-* (single, one) to refer to retainers instead of the farm.

(4) Russian policy and national interests. I am sorry to have to maintain that these are ignored in Mr Carr's book. It omits, for instance, the basic purpose of Ivan's Livonian war (ascribing it exclusively to desire for plunder), the root cause or causes of Russian territorial expansion, etc. Approval or disapproval has nothing to do with it.

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## Among this week's contributors

JANE BECKETT is a lecturer in the History of Art at the University of East Anglia.

C. R. BOKER's books include *The Dutch Seaborne Empire 1600-1800*, 1965, and *Anglo-Dutch Wars of the 17th Century*, 1974.

VICTOR BROMBERG's books include *The Novels of Flaubert*, 1966, *Stendhal: Fiction and the Themes of Freedom*, 1972, and *The Romantic Prison*, 1978.

CHRISTOPHER BROWN is Assistant Keeper at the National Gallery, London.

EDWARD BURNS is a lecturer in English Literature at the University of Liverpool. He has recently completed a study of Restoration comedy.

JOSEPH CHERNIAK's most recent novel, *The Daughter*, was published earlier this year.

RICHARD COMBS is editor of the British Film Institute's *Monthly Film Bulletin*.

VALENTINE CUNNINGHAM is the editor of *The Penguin Book of Spanish Civil War Verse*, 1980.

DON CURRY's *Taking Leave of God* was published in 1980.

ALEX DE JONCK is the author of *Dostoevsky and the Age of Intensity*, 1975.

KETIL FOULCHER is a lecturer in Asian Studies at the Flinders University of South Australia.

HENRY GIFFORD's books include *Tolstoy: a Critical Anthology*, 1971, and *Pasternak*, 1977.

GEOFFREY GRISON's most recent collection of poems is *The Fiesia*, 1980.

## Matthew Josephson

Sir, – Alden Whitman calls David Shi's book a "vacuum-cleaner biography" (Letters, July 24). One that picks up the dirt, perhaps? His quarrel is really with Mr Shi, from whose work I drew my information, but before calling my review "as nasty as it is unskilful" Mr Whitman should have made sure that his own facts were right. He says that in 1930 Josephson "purchased 12,000 acres" in Connecticut at \$600 an acre, adding that this was "hardly a princely sum, even by 1930 standards" and that the purchase "virtually exhausted the family savings". Since the total would have amounted to more than 7 million dollars, that would not have been surprising. In fact, however, all this is nonsense. Josephson bought 200 acres at \$60 an acre; that is, he spent \$12,000. Not much money, I agree. Later on, as I said, he was pretty well-heeled; for details, consult Mr Shi.

JULIAN SYMONS.  
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## 'Dying, in Other Words'

Sir, – Maggie Gee complains (Letters, July 23) that I got the plot of her novel "wrong in every particular". She should look again at what she wrote. If Clotilde were not trying to be an artist then why would she select her underwear by "what an artist wore" (page 146)? If John hasn't left Felicity for Moira (I mentioned nothing about a wife) then why on earth does Felicity say he has (page 92)? If Macbeth hasn't taken Moira's virginity then whose buttock is "the glory of his dried sperm" (page 61)? Etc.

The plot was not, as Maggie Gee states, the only thing I noticed. My fundamental complaint was with the impenetrable thickets of present par-

aphrase clauses and interior monologue. Here is where the novel lost its way and unnecessary ambiguities arose. As to the matter of "a literary text" after Nabokov, Borges, and Montaigne, no doubt Maggie Gee had this in mind, but the result in my judgment was not among the book's recommendable attributes.

STODDARD MARTIN.  
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## Horace Walpole

Sir, – William Crowder (July 31) is undoubtedly right to draw attention to the splendid scholarly achievement of the late W. S. Lewis, general editor of Horace Walpole's Correspondence. Might one reason for an insignificant appreciation of Dr Lewis's work be the failure of the Yale team to offer selected letters of Walpole in readily available soft-cover form? This is an urgent requirement, especially when one considers that the first volumes of the Yale Walpole came out in the late 1940s and have not been available for many years to those of us who were not alive at the time.

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## Alpha, Bethe and Gamow

Sir, – May I correct an error in the "silly joke" V. F. Corneke narrated in his review of *Cygnoni italiani* (June 26)? George Gamow and Haas Bethe did not search out R. A. Alpher; instead Alpher and Gamow decided to insist that Bethe (whose name precluded any need for a search) be co-author of "The Origin of Chemical Elements" (*Physical Review*, April 1, 1948). Bethe was not particularly amused but acquiesced in the arrangement.

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## Tradition, imagination and self-parody

By Christopher Wintle

PETER MAXWELL DAVIES:  
Symphony No. 2  
The Proms  
The Lighthouse  
Sadler's Wells

One of the effects of Peter Maxwell Davies's recent works is to bring back to mind the dichotomy between lyric and dramatic music. Fugue was the distinction as lying essentially between independent and integrated forms, between melodic music that holds itself aloof from the "merely descriptive and declaratory" on the one hand, and, on the other, music of conflict and passion that depends upon the particularity of context for its definition. However much criticism since Nietzsche may have concerned itself with the interdependence of these kinds of opposites – and only recently Hans Keller has written on the sentimentality underlying Britten's naïveté – these and other dualities are still central to Davies's work: they inform the imaginative and technical worlds alike, and the music's vitality derives from the tensions inherent within them.

From this point of view, Davies's Second Symphony represents his most ambitious and remarkable achievement together of opposites. Written with the players of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in mind, and receiving its first English performance at the Proms, it sets out to re-examine traditional symphonic processes in terms often originally conceived to challenge them. The dramatic framework is familiar: the four movements comprise a challenging, energetic Sonata-Allegro, a waltz Adagio of Mahlerian intensity, a scurrying Scherzo punctuated by an inert, reflective Trio, and a sardonic, hand-like Passacaglia that transforms itself into a vigorous, synoptic Finale. Whilst the gestural language – rather remarkably – recalls the outer trappings of the Romantic symphony, with a Tchaikovskyan fervour infusing the spare, polarized textures of a Shostakovich, the large-scale tonal argument tempers this by fusing the

kinds of opposition Strauss explored in *Also Sprach Zarathustra* with a scheme familiar from the later music of Bartók.

But the details of the writing call upon quite different traditions. The principal mode of continuity in the work is not that of organically evolving surface, but of a Stravinskian-like juxtaposition of episodes, each of whose textures is characteristically unchanging. In place of homophony (tune and accompaniment) there is ubiquitous counterpoint. Instead of the melodic fragmentation of easily recognizable themes, serially-derived processes transform elements of a Marian plainsong. *Nativitas tua, Dei Genetrix*, in a manner that is only partially discernible aurally, yielding lines which achieve their lyric independence precisely through their inscrutability. The rhythmic proportions, furthermore, far from playing off regular phrase-lengths against irregular ones, derive their value from the kind of magic-square manipulations generated in the 1950s to project quite different kinds of structures.

Because of, and not despite, the successful fusion of these things, the work is a triumph. Through its sectionalism and prolixity of surface, a genuinely large-breathed piece emerges. The tonal argument works; the textures are imaginative; and the energy sustains itself marvellously over the fifty minutes. From an expressive point of view, moreover, the self-sufficient musical elements are nicely balanced by the work's Orphic imagery: the rarified chastity of the bird-calls offsets the earthy whoops of the horn quartet, and the amphibious plunkings of the marimba are overlaid by a patina of bell sounds, full of light and complexity. There are still, though, some roughnesses: the orchestral balance is imperfect (in the slow movement the solos are sometimes indistinguishable from their accompaniments); the timpani herald too many apocalyptic climaxes; and the parts of the Symphony Orchestra under Gennadi Rozhdenskiy needed more rehearsal time to secure better ensemble and tempi).

Dualities, albeit of a different kind, are also the explicit concern of Davies's one-act chamber-opera, *The Lighthouse*, although here they are cast within a large-scale metaphor for self-discovery. The work, set to the composer's own libretto, is a spooky inquirer's yarn à la Marie Celeste, which significantly divides into two parts. In the prologue, set before an imagined court of inquiry, three ship's officers describe and partially reconstruct their journey to the lighthouse. Upon arrival, they are disconcerted to find that the three keepers have inexplicably disappeared. The second part, which portrays the events inside the lighthouse leading up to this disappearance, extends the journey psychologically by allotting the parts of the keepers to the singers who took the officers' roles.

The outcome of all this – the opera's climactic confrontation of the forces of Good and Evil – lays bare the conflicts and experiences at the heart of Davies's creative imagination. Each keeper is confronted by ghosts from his past – ghosts already prefigured in the songs which the men have sung to pass the time of day. One has murdered his parents; another has had sinister sexual relations with "the boy at the manse"; and the third's religious zealotry is shown to manifest the spirit of Anti-christ. But the experience of self-recognition is too much for them: calling upon God's help in a hymn, they crawl out into the stormy night, blinded by the brilliant light emanating from the "eyes of the Beast". That these grim epiphanies are exorcized, and through exorcism leave the psyche restored but lifeless, is demonstrated by two brief concluding events. First, the singers return as the officers, enacting the moment of their discovery of the empty lighthouse; they withdraw, distressed, leaving everything "in ship-shape order". They then return as the ghosts of the keepers, numbly seated within the pulsating lighthouse, which, like Eddystone, is "now automatic".

As Davies handles them, these kinds of experience, which would seem to have their roots in the re-

velatory disturbances of adolescence or mid-life, demand a direct and parallel response on the part of an audience. At present, this is not fully achieved. Certainly the dialogue, in its pacing, its movement between reported and real action, its ease of vocal writing, and its discreet foreshadowing of later events, offers some of his best theatrical writing (though what a pity that in this touring production the lighthouse, the agent of revelation, was neglected so little physical presence here).

In the second half, however, Davies falls victim to his own facility. The action begins well, with edgy, but humorous, exchanges between the men, leading to a racy, chamber song from Blazes the first keeper. But the tone of the second song (Sandy's) seems misjudged. To make a musical point about the corruption of the keeper's utterance, Davies offers a parody of an idealized love-song. In itself, this could work. But the use of an out-of-tune piano pumping out banal triplet notes, and the abrupt and inappropriately, the air of the easily-won *épaulement* familiar from the composer's earlier music: suddenly, the opera seems to be sending itself up. As a result, tension is dissipated, and the subsequent events seem merely melodramatic. And this affects the climax. For Davies's world of images is not in itself especially new, and if the three successive mad-scenes are to convince, then they need to be supported by a more consistently sustained dramatic context that occurs here.

Nevertheless, the music was performed by Neil Mackie, Michael Rippon and David Wilson-Johnson, accompanied by the augmented Fires of London under John Carewe, with sufficient commitment to make one think that with revisions this could well become one of the minor classics of chamber opera.

The English National Opera's new season at the Coliseum opens on August 8 with *Tristan and Isolde*. Other productions include *Orfeo*, opening on August 20, and Jonathan Miller's production of *Otello* (September 24).

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## Exemplary lives

By Salman Rushdie

RALPH de BOISSIERE:

Crown Jewel  
361pp. Allison and Busby. £6.95.  
(Paperback, Picador. £2.75.)  
0 85031 292 2

In 1952, when Ralph de Boissière's absorbing chronicle of Trinidad was first published by an Australian left-wing house, the island which Christopher Columbus named Trinity after its "three peaks rising into the blue sky" was still a decade away from full independence. The memory of the great strike wave of 1937, which is the background to the story of *Crown Jewel*, would have been fresher then. In 1930, Sidney Webb, the socialist Colonial Secretary, had issued a despatch encouraging the formation of trade unions; but throughout the period described in *Crown Jewel*, workers who sought to form such unions were harassed, mysteriously sacked, and finally, in 1937, fired upon by British troops. Such hypocrisies and ironies are perhaps easier for the British to swallow nowadays than they would have been four years before. But can this be why this nostalgic, humane, vibrant book has never been published before in Britain or in the West Indies?

For a political novel to seem as relevant today as it was three decades ago is a triumph; yet *Crown Jewel*, rooted in the specificities of its period, manages the trick without seeming to strain for universality. Some of the specifics, of course, remain largely unaltered. Hugh Tinker has called the Caribbean islands "independent but still colonized"; three overseas companies still control ninety per cent of the Trinidadian economy. But the enormous appeal of this book lies not so much in its committed socialism as in its ability to integrate politics with the lives of its characters, and to make those

characters, who could so easily have been merely typical or exemplary, into human beings worth caring about as well.

Appropriately enough for this tale of the political awakening of "Trinity Island," the novel's six major characters divide into trinities. At the apex of one of these triangles is a young man, André de Coudray (whom it is perhaps too easy to see as a version of Ralph de Boissière), born of a prosperous white family which "had got themselves a slave ancestor and ... were as a result confined to an outer circle". André, who veers between embracing his black ancestry in the person of the poor seamstress's daughter Elena, and rejecting it in favour of the haughty English beauty Gwenneth, is more than a sort of racial butterfly; de Boissière rescues him from triviality by giving him a depth of intelligence and anguish which obliges the reader to sympathize with his dilemma, and to sympathize with both his young women too.

The second trinity is wholly working-class, politically oriented, and racially orientated. At its centre is the servant girl Cassie, who fills in love with the tragic, delicately-drawn Popito Luna, who loses his job and is rescued from the despair of unemployment by meeting and being befriended by the radical black leader Ben Le Maître. Together with Cassie he becomes involved in the formation of Le Maître's Workers' Welfare Party. When Luna is murdered by a racist policeman, the attachment of Cassie and Le Maître also turns to love, so that we see this forceful leader as a hesitant, awkward human being, of whom Cassie quite rightly says, "You donno one thing about courtin', nian".

Through the eyes of this sextet, we are shown a vivid panorama of Trinidadian life, rich and poor, social and political: from the wild, doctored ritual of a Shango dance to the intricate details of political infighting. The dialogue, as so often in West

Indian novels, and some of the set pieces, like the meetings of the Minimum Wage Committee, are filled with a grim humour.

"... How many bloomers, let us say, panties do you think [a working woman] will require every year?"  
"Panties are a small item," Ormsby agreed. "It's probably easier to assess the cost."  
"Incidentally, Mr Chairman," Dollard added, "I've had a talk to my cook about this, you know. She informs me that some people don't wear pants in the daytime."  
"Thom: 'Do you mean they wear them at night?'"

There is the occasional false note. The writing has a tendency to slip into initiation-Biblical, never more so than in the short historical prologue which reads rather like the purple excesses of James Michener; the attempt to render an American boss's accent phonetically is embarrassingly crude; a number of the minor white characters seem one-dimensional. But then, colonial whites frequently are mere cartoons of human beings.

Apart from these minor caveats, *Crown Jewel* remains a salutary corrective to the feeble, irresponsible image that Trinidadians have been given by V. S. Naipaul; compellingly readable from start to finish, it is informed throughout by the kind of love which understands why a kind of destitute woman will buy her daughter a pair of gold bangles: "Not the body alone had to be nourished, it was just as important to nourish and protect one's soul. One had to surround it with beauty, with love, with dreams or in the struggle for spiritual existence one would not survive."

Ralph de Boissière believes, as did Marx, in socialism as a vehicle for spiritual liberation. This is what makes *Crown Jewel* so rewarding: closer in spirit to Robert Tresselt's *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropist* than to Tolstoy or to Turgenev, but none the worse for that.

## Node to node

By Galen Strawson

ROB SHAW:

The Ceres Solution  
191pp. Gollancz. £5.95.  
0 575 02966 8

And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty-nine years ... and Lamech lived after he began Noah five hundred and ninety-five years. Even fundamentalists must sometimes wonder how we lived so long. But the broad-minded Mollinians are far more puzzled by the fact that we don't still do so. Mollin is the planet whence the human species, currently to be found on nearly two hundred planets, most probably originated; and while the average life-span on human-inhabited planets is seven or eight hundred years, the Mollinians themselves, saturating their biosphere with longevity-inducing agents, have achieved a span of fifty centuries.

Writers of science fiction, thinking in light-years, accustomed to the galactic perspective, are bothered by time and space, by the shortness of our reach with respect to both. Longevity is one of science-fiction's most recurrent preoccupations; faster-than-light travel is another. In *The Ceres Solution*, Rob Shaw deals with both. He postulates the existence of second and third-order forces in the universe - presumably our current physics deals only in first-order forces, Mollinians, sensitive to the higher-order forces, are aware of "sympathetic congruencies" between a network of nodes which may be a few miles or hundreds of light-years apart. The topology of sympathetic congruency has a mathematics of its own, and, tracing a complex, three-dimensional "mimo-curve" upon the air, concentrating on the shape of the equinox in his head, a Mollinian achieves instantaneous transfer from node to node - he "skorfs" from one to the other. We on Earth may once have had the skill, but our moon is an enormous generator and reflector of chaotic, third-order forces. No one born under its influence - Shaw restores a few grains of truth to astrology - could ever pick up intimations of the more delicate pattern of the forces.

Human civilizations tend to last no more than about 20,000 years, and the Mollinians want to find out why, in order to forestall their own decline. Their Bureau of Wordens is entrusted with the task; and so it is that Gretana ty Iltha, newly recruited to the staff of the Wardenship of Earth by the magnificent and megalomaniacal Warden, Vekrynn ty Orthra, arrives at a node situated in a clump of trees on the American East Coast, on the run-down Earth of 2024 AD: her task, to observe and record the ways of the world.

Also active on earth is a clandestine Mollinian organization, 2H, opposed to the passive policies of Warden Vekrynn who allows Earth to suffer in the interests of science. But a neatly choreographed series of coincidences involving the Terran hero of the book, Denny Hargate - a clever, viciously embittered victim of multiple peripheral neuritis - reveals a far greater inquiry. In his youth, far in our past, when we lived as long as Seth and Methuselah, Lamech and Mohaleh, Vekrynn introduced a Thymosin-secreting agent into our atmosphere, which gradually reduced our life expectancy to a mere seven decades. He wished to observe, within his lifetime, the rise, fall, and final extinction of a human civilization, so as to record it all in his (to date) billion-word masterpiece, *Analytical Notes on the Evolution of One Human Civilization*; and so decided to accelerate the whole process.

One doesn't have to be trained in the methodology of the social sciences to be suspicious of this research technique. But if it's lousy sociology on Vekrynn's part, it's good science fiction on Shaw's part. *The Ceres Solution* is outstanding: unusually well-written, well-paced, economically and stylishly constructed. There's some strange characterization - of the crippled Hargate, with his black, mirthful sense of humour, later, and courage, and of the "2H" agent Lorrest ty Thialen. Above all, perhaps, Shaw creates a new standpoint from which to reflect upon the human, or rather, more particularly, Terran condition - the standpoint of beings who are physically perfect, who have all the time in the world, and who are none the less recognizably human.

One is not, though, surprised to discover that the Terran condition in 2124 AD does not look entirely unfamiliar from this standpoint: it looks dismused, poor, nasty, brutish, and very short - even given all the advantages of a (deceptively) civil society. Mayflies through we be, we are continually given to linking a Mollinian view of things when we indulge in general reflections upon our salutary lot.

## Circe in a straw hat

By Heather Lawton

MIRANDA SEYMOUR:

Medea  
247pp. Michael Joseph. £7.50.  
0 7181 2007 8

In using myths, the novelist is granted a freedom not shared by the writer of historical novels, who for credibility's sake must adhere closely to documented facts. As Robert Graves notes in *The Greek Myths*, "The history of Medea has been embellished and distorted by the extravagant fantasies of many tragic dramatists."

Notably Euripides, whose some say was bribed by the Corinthians (in order to absolve them of their guilt) to pretend that Medea killed two of her own children. In her latest novel, Miranda Seymour loosely interprets the many contradictory versions of the Medea myth to suit her own narrative purpose of presenting Medea as a lady of violent passions, whose tragic flaw seems to be a "vaulting ambition" and an obsessive love for the wrong man.

But there are pitfalls for the author who tries to humanize mythological figures, as can be seen from Medea's recollections of the torments Circe: "One of my clearest memories of Circe is of a plump, bare-footed lady in a large straw hat and not too clean linen robe,

climbing over black sea-rocks in search of mussels. . . . Such descriptions do tend to diminish Circe's magical or mythical qualities. Similarly Ms Seymour's portrayal of Jason (again through Medea's piercingly searing green eyes) seems far removed from the hero of Pindar's *Pythian Ode* or William Morris's "The Life and Death of Jason". "I loved him from the first moment I saw him on the Argos' prow - I never questioned it. He was unlike any other man, strong and fair as a child of the sun. . . . I thought he was a god until I saw his hot blue eyes-gods never look at a woman like that." In her attempts to make these characters humanly credible, Ms Seymour diminishes them. Mary Renault's *The King Must Die* and Henry Treece's portrayal of Elektra show that it is possible to avoid such a mistake.

Miranda Seymour lives in Corfu (the setting of her previous novel *Madonna of the Island*), yet her landscapes both in that book and this new one are implausibly filled with flowering seas of oleander branches, blushing lilacs and golden cliffs of gorse.

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by Pat Rogers

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£5.95.  
0 905459 34 2

It could not last. The long hot Georgian summer had to end, history by the autumn blasts of urban hypocrisy. Those ghostly presences whom Edith Sitwell conjured up, sinking back "lazily and dreamily into a mirage of the year 1711", have fled before the professional, busy-snatchers. Bath, which was arguably the first provincial city of modern England, had somehow survived until now almost untouched by radical historiography. Architectural remains more vivid than any estate plans or hundreds of leases; a vernacular so cheerfully imperious that even Pevsner could not make sport with its mannerisms; a limited industrial activity, an absence of regional influence, a picturesque setting - all these were enough to put off the day when Bath was forced to succumb.

But it has succumbed, in R. S. Neale's engrossing book, where Bath finally goes the way of Cambridge and Liverpool. Urban history has thrived most in the early modern period and for the Victorian age. As regards the period covered in Professor Neale's book, the most substantial contribution by far is the impressive study by C. W. Chalklin, *The Provincial Towns of Georgian England* (1974). Chalklin drew much of his most telling detail from localities such as Portsea Island and the Sculcoates district of Hull; his detailed, scrupulous methods seemed most applicable to relatively anonymous areas of workaday cities. Bath escaped such treatment initially, perhaps because of its raffish holiday image and its atypical grandeur. Yet the place offers some valuable evidence, in short supply elsewhere. Its stock of small houses designed for artisans is larger than almost anywhere else, and incidentally far more extensive than any surviving body of rural housing for the poor. Any serious inquiry into what life was like on the ground, for the bulk of the people in the eighteenth or early nineteenth century, ought therefore to take full account of Bath - we must not be distracted by the monumnetality of the surroundings. To that extent, Neale's enterprise is altogether welcome.

However, the author's aims are much wider and more polemical than those of a student such as Chalklin. Professor Neale is an economic historian by avocation, but as the subtitle may suggest, his book is a moralistic, as much as a statistical, interpretation of events. It is a social history *enfin*, *and*, where the "demand" for Bath is treated as one more vulgar item of luxury consuming habits. ("As the American War came to an end demand for Bath recovered. . . .") Its underlying cast of mind is Marxist, although the paucity of the evidence concerning actual economic behaviour often makes this more of an aspiration in tone than a realizable mode of argument. The Bath working class was inconveniently long in the making - indeed, it scarcely figures in E. P. Thompson's classic study. When the "radical utopia" does arrive belatedly, Neale makes the most of it: but he has to devote a good deal of the book to depicting the forces which made it hard for class consciousness to emerge on cue.

Even then, the utopia is short-lived. There is a "great and glorious moment" identified by the author, when during the Reform Bill crisis a speaker promises to "strike the tyrant [Wellington] dead", should he "attempt to impose on us the hateful

fetters of his oppressor". By 1841 Bath could even be characterized as a Radical hotbed. But all along there had been "deficiencies in the range of social critical thought available to the city's labouring population". The people, especially migrant workers, lacked "any developed sense of community in their new urban environment", consequently, they "lived their lives according to the precepts of the prevailing deferential ethos". When their representatives attained some municipal power, they clung to a weedy sort of voluntarism and missed their chance of creating active local democracy. Electoral tortures swung against them in 1847, when Lord Ashley (later the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury) defeated the radical

economic indicators.

He cannot find enough about wages and prices, so that "it is not possible to describe the experiences of workers during the booms and slumps that accompanied the building of the city". As for the labouring population, "unlike their customers in Bath, they wrote no books and no admiring of the labouring population who might have written about them took their secrets with them". Even on basic vital statistics, "the sources permit us to create a very incomplete picture of the lives of the labouring population" - such matters as the extent of suicide fall into the area of guesswork. Similarly, "it is not possible to offer more

figures for the booms in house construction tally more closely with T. S. Ashton's by now rather ancient estimates for English building cycles than with the revisionist data of J. Parry Lewis. However, it would seem that the economic take-off could have occurred in different places, in a different order, without the pattern of events in Bath undergoing great change. One can invent a quite different scenario for the industrial revolution and leave the course of Bath life pretty well undisturbed. The money was spent in Bath, regardless of how and where it had been accumulated. Again, the attractions of the resort helped to promote entrepreneurial activity: the

interesting but in many respects subsidiary figure of Richard Marchant. There is also some fascinating material concerning the princely Duke of Chandos, clearing up some of the financial tangles left irritatingly obscure in the long but ill-digested study by the Bakers. What annoys Neale is that it was the moneyed men, and not the builders, who called the tune: John Wood the elder, like his son in time, made no sort of fortune, whilst "financial intermediaries" like Marchant prospered in the tents of ingenuity.

The book's case is weakened by a number of flaws in the execution. Neale cannot be blamed for the scantiness of some of the evidence, but he surely is too ready to generalize from a scattering of cases. There is always a gap between the interesting but thin facts and the resonant socio-cultural conclusions. Bath is perpetually being described as "an existential expression of the economic and social structure of society and of its dominant ideology", while on the next page only a handful of case-histories are assembled (and some of these, as with Figure 4 on pages 77-9, mislabelled). There is not really very much rioting or civil commotion, less than contemporary Britain can supply; yet Neale diagnoses "a culture of deprivation and violence", with that facile term "anomie" blithely bestowed on the slenderest grounds. Like Marxist thinkers in general, Neale describes as contradiction what is often only contrast.

His writing is often not very clear ("my claim is that space in Bath is an historical conjuncture and a social form deriving its meaning from the social processes expressed through it"), and sometimes muddled in syntax (see pages 222, 230). We hear of "atavistic Luddite behaviour" in the 1730s, we have "mutual acquaintance" and "Rev. Elvin", and an attitude towards punctuation which resembles that of a prairie farmer towards hedges. Much more serious is the desperate repetitiveness of key terms. The phrase "organisation of space" occurs up to five times on a single page, and fifty-six times in the entire text; twenty-three of these involve the words "social organisation of space". "Absolute property" occurs twenty-three times, mostly in conjunction with "self-interest". The expression "polemic signs", borrowed from architectural historians, turns up thirteen times in a single chapter; "web of credit" twenty times in another; "deferential" eleven times in a third; "Corporatism" is used eighteen times in another chapter; "agrarian capitalism" is found fourteen times in the whole work. Some of these may be necessary forms of words, but they are often key concepts, whose repetition does nothing to allay a reader's suspicion that their incantation is a way of covering over difficulties in the argument.

In addition, the book is stuffed with irritating mistakes. Once Neale refers to a mysterious "Burton" who visited Bath; the index has "Bishop Burton", and in the source (Barbeau) one finds that this is in fact Joseph Butler, Bath's Montagu and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu are regularly accorded a superfluous *e* in their name; Lady Rich appears as Lady Rick (again the source is accurate); H. T. Dickinson is confused with P. G. M. Dickson; Pierce Accout is given as Pierre. Charles Chenevis Trench figures in the notes as "Charles Tench"; at this rate Howard Erskine-Hill might have come up as Henry Hall, but he merely loses a byphen. An acknowledgement is supplied to Professor L. S. Pressnell, but that does not stop him from always appearing as "Pressnell". The title of Barbeau's classic book on Bath is wrongly given: William Pakeney is referred to as Earl of Bath many years prematurely; Ralph Allen, on one of his infrequent outcances, is named John; the Black Act is dated 1725 (recte 1723); General Wada's term as MP for Bath is misdated also.

The author's handling of sources gives rise to disquiet, too. On page



candidate. It is one disappointment among many for Neale, who finds much to deplore in almost every aspect of the city's history.

This is indeed an angry book, and not just for ideological reasons. The very acknowledgments are grumpy. Neale reproaches the council for the way in which Bath archives are kept. He grumbles about the lack of time for research when he was on the staff of Bath Technical College. Fortunately, he has since enjoyed periods of study leave and visiting fellowships in what looks like unparalleled abundance: those of us working not far from the banks of the Avon who have never had any kind of sabbatical can only feel sorry for the author's research opportunities. But it does not cheer up Neale for long. He is periodically cast down by the shortage of evidence, particularly as regards prime

than the most general estimate of total expenditure at any one time. Further, "there is no way of telling how much of the income earned in Bath was transferred elsewhere . . . [or] what share of this high average income was retained by the various social groups".

Some of these gaps are truly disabling, for Neale wishes to argue that Bath was always a part of the national economy. He would like to establish that "while Bath was invented as a pre-industrial leisure centre its growth was also bound up with the industrial transformation of England from the second half of the eighteenth century". To this end he cites the growth of coach services. But the argument as it stands is not really convincing. Obviously, capital formation for building purposes rested on the same methods as elsewhere: and nationwide trade cycles affected the availability for loanable

## Again and Again

You remember - as near as you could to moaning men -  
The crack on stone edges of hard truncheons  
Which had misad head, shoulders, arms?  
Yes, I remember them.

You remember horses, reined by cold disciplined men,  
That plunged on rolled marbles and ball-bearings,  
Pipes skirling, screams, flocked starting men?  
I remember them.

You remember breaks, boozing, scattering, returning,  
Another charge, scattering again, now an old shaman  
Evaporated with time comes back again?  
Yes, I remember them.

Will you remember how water cannon and T.V. crews  
Advance, how tear-gas sneaks into alleys, this opening:  
Movement to growling music of an odious dance? Yes,  
I shall remember them.

Peace be unto you, These black heaps lightly skinned  
With trees cover an unextinguished heat of being  
Abused and losing hope. Stones there lie ready,  
And again and again we shall have reason  
To remember them.

Geoffrey Grigson



216 he writes, "As Jonathan Swift wrote as early as 1736, 'This town is grown to such an enormous size, that above half the day must be spent in the streets in going from one place to another.' Though this passage was actually written to Swift by Mrs. Rensselaer, and she was referring not to Bath, which she had just left and found nearly compact, but to London — the quotation therefore works in quite the opposite direction. Neale is very hazy on John Wood's dmidism, which apart from an eccentric hyperborean connection was fairly orthodox. He makes a great fuss about the obscene books published by James Leake. "Bath's leading printer and bookseller". Actually Leake was not at this stage a printer at all, and the imprint was false one, since the works in question were truly productions of the notorious Edmund Curl — not Bath works in any sense.

The book's weakness on larger cultural issues is focused in an extraordinary passage early on. Neale cites a list of authors and artists of the period "who either visited or lived in Bath". This includes Pope, Chesterfield, Fielding, Sarah Fielding, Johnson, Horace Walpole, Smollett, Burke, Goldsmith, Herschel, Boswell, Sheridan, Malthus, Wordsworth, Scott, Jane Austen, Quin, Garrick, Elizabeth Linley, Mrs Siddons, Hoare, Gainsborough and Lawrence. The author refers briskly to the "numerous petty poets" who were also in attendance ("mere numbers do not constitute a school"), and then glosses the list as follows:

Although Pope is mentioned, it does not include any of the great men of England's Enlightenment:

## Dispensing the chit-chat

By Robert Halsband

REX A. BARRELL (Editor):  
French Correspondence of Philip Dormer Stanhope, Fourth Earl of Chesterfield.  
Volume 1, 204pp. Volume 2, 187pp.  
Ottawa: Borealis Press.  
0 80 090006 5

Like most cultivated English men and women of his time, Chesterfield felt thoroughly at home in the language, literature and culture of France. But having been in Paris only for a few short visits he was content to enjoy its pleasures from across the Channel. He corresponded in French with his friends there and in Holland (where he served as British ambassador for four years), and with his son and godson when they were young boys. These French letters are included in Bonamy Dobrée's superb edition (1932) of Chesterfield's complete correspondence. Hence there was some point in Rex A. Barrell's doctoral thesis entitled *Chesterfield et la France* (1968), in whose preface he asks, "Is it then not a little astonishing that there is not a single work on the relations of Chesterfield and France?" In fact, in 1951, Dobrée had published a mealy and elegant essay entitled "Chesterfield and France" in the *English Miscellany* (edited by Mario Praz).

But Barrell makes much of Alec Mellor's *Lord Chesterfield et son temps* (1970). In this exuberant study of the man and his background, Mellor argues that Chesterfield "was never a pure and authentic Englishman, but a Frenchman of British nationality". Such generous patriotism would have to award French identity to many cosmopolitan Europeans of various nationalities. Something of the same spirit informs this collection of Chesterfield's letters in French.

The longest of the correspondences in Volume One, of seventy-one letters, is addressed to the Marquise de Monconseil. In style they are well turned, frequently dispensing the chit-chat and airy nothing that Voltaire's letters had made fashionable. More fruitfully Chesterfield wanted advice from Madame de Monconseil — whose name makes an amusing pun — about his son's educational visit to Paris. He also regaled her with details about the building and decoration of Chesterfield House, to be completely in the French taste. He gossiped, benignly,

Newton, Locke, Shaftesbury, and Flume — although Hume, like Burton [sic] and Berkeley, did visit the place in passing and remain unnoticed. In the early eighteenth century eminent men seem to have stayed away from Bath in large numbers.

But what of the others? What of Vanbrugh, Wychley, Congreve, Addison, DeFoe, Gay, Arbuthnot, Prior, Parnell, Thomson, Young, Richardson, Byrom, Collins, Shenstone? What of Bolingbroke, Burlington, Hawksmoor, Gibbon, Cowper, the Burneys, Baretti, Foote, Beckford, Sterne, Colley Cibber?

The proposition is totally silly, but since it chimes in with other aspects of the career it requires detailed refutation. Flume made not a casual visit, but a serious attempt to improve his failing health: sadly, the waters proved "injurious". Locke died before Bath got going properly, and his friends preferred Tunbridge. Newton's abnormal good health and durable eyesight, allied to his contemplative habits, explain his absence sufficiently.

What of Marlborough, Chatham, Wilkes, Clive, Newcastle, North, Charles James Fox, Hervey, Carteret and Camden? What of Hannah More and Mrs Delany, Mrs Thrale and Mary Wollstonecraft, Mrs Montagu and Mrs Carter? What of Hartley and Porson? The list is almost endless. Surely the truth is that Bath, whatever its relation to national economic trends, served as a crucible of cultural development, visited by men of the stature of Haydn. To pretend otherwise is to shut one's eyes to the facts. Handel preferred Cheltenham, and Robert Walpole generally stayed

about Lady Hervey, who during her widowhood became a fanatical francophile. "We have here the body of Lady Hervey," he writes, "but without her heart or wit, which she insists on still in Paris." He writes, once, of studying astronomy, an unlikely pursuit for him, in order to debate in Parliament on the calendar reform bill, which he sponsored. And as he grew older he stoically tells of his illnesses, particularly his deafness. The death of Bolingbroke, the earthquake of 1750, a play by Crébillon fils, smallpox inoculation (practised in England half a century before being permitted in France) are some other topics that stand out in the fluent, graceful flow.

His dozen letters to Madame du Boccage, a lively blue-stocking, discuss more literary topics. He complains of the weariness of Richardson's *Clarissa*, saying that if Prévoost were to translate it (as he did the next year) he would have to abridge it by half; yet he recognizes that although Richardson lacks learning and style he does understand the workings of the heart. Voltaire's history of Louis XIV aroused his most enthusiastic admiration: "I've read it three times, and shall reread it thirty," he tells Madame du Boccage; "in a word, I'm mad about it." He knew Voltaire personally, having met him in London in 1726, when the Frenchman was enjoying English liberty after imprisonment in the Bastille. (They later corresponded, but of this exchange only two of Chesterfield's and two of Voltaire's letters survive.)

Of Chesterfield's letters to Dutch friends, those to Baron Torck, who worked in the foreign office at The Hague, contain political and diplomatic gossip. The other correspondences are negligible, such as two short letters to Solomon Dayrolles, to whom he also sent 145 letters in English. (Dayrolles is famous as the recipient of Chesterfield's deathbed courtesy.)

This same imbalance between French and English letters characterizes one of the major series that fill the second volume, and destroys its coherence. To his son, forty-one letters in French; but these were interspersed with English ones in the complete set of 430. The earliest ones, mainly in French, consist of elementary lessons (in geography, classical literature and mythology) written to elementary language to a boy of five. At the age of seven, lecturing letters on politeness; at the age of fifteen, on debauchery. He sent the last French one in 1751, though he continued to write to him (in English) until the young man's death in

away because his estranged wife spent the season in Bath. But such people were the exceptions.

In the *Purgatorio* it is La Pia who claims, "Siena mi fe". Eighteenth-century English pieties were nurtured in Bath as much as anywhere, and a cultural history which does not give proper recognition to the great and the gifted will falsify its claims to an adequate grasp of the subject. Neale has written an instructive and salutary book, which gives us some tantalizing glimpses of another Bath, the city of the common people. It is a pity that in his explorations of a sink of iniquity, he should be so cursory and inaccurate concerning the valley of pleasure. A laudable ambition to understand "both the expressive and documentary meanings of Bath" will only be fulfilled if expressions are precisely recorded and documents scrupulously displayed. The problem with this book is that grandiloquent polemical expressions float upon a froth of loosely handled documentation.

William Lowndes on the Royal Crecent, by contrast, is brisk, chatty and inoffensively slight. He has a journalist's fondness for words like "prestigious", he can't spell "superstition", and he thinks Herschel was Astronomer-Royal. However, he does tell some decent anecdotes, and he gives indiscreet hints of recent goings-on in the Crecent, including the property prices in late years. It's the Age of Scandal, with the anachronistic film set for *Joseph Andrews* duly seen as appropriate at bottom. Not very fashionable in scholarly circles to say so, but Mr Lowndes's profigate bucks probably have one foot in reality, which is as much as you can say for Professor Neale's social processes.

1768. It is these later letters that are the basis of Chesterfield's literary reputation. Sainte-Beuve called him the English La Rochefoucauld because of his English, not his French letters. His letters to his godson, his successor as fifth earl, are a reply of those to his son. They lack vitality and urgency, for by then Chesterfield was an old man, and his godson's future was assured, unlike the illegitimate son's, who would have to make his own way in the world.

These early letters to both boys make tiresome reading. Why did they need to be lectured and preached at so pitilessly when their tutors could teach them the same schoolroom facts? It is not surprising that neither of the boys fulfilled the high hopes their mentor had for them. His son emerged, in Sir John Hawkins's opinion, as a "sub whom the parent bear could never lick into shape"; and his godson lived out a humdrum career as a country-loving peer. Education by precept: does it ever succeed?

This collection of Chesterfield's French correspondence is divided into two parts. The first, of 100 letters, is combined into a single one of less than 400 pages. Both volumes contain the identical incomplete, skimpy index, and both display Chesterfield's portrait on the front cover and Barrell's on the back. Except for a few unimportant ones, all the letters by Chesterfield are reprinted from Dobrée's edition, and the relatively few letters to him from the 1777 edition of his *Miscellaneous Works*. Brief prefaces are provided for each correspondent, even when — as for Fontenelle and Montesquieu — not a single letter survives. The prefaces are written in a style of appalling clumsiness, and sometimes contain inaccuracies to boot. The annotations range from the inadequate to the irrelevant; and comments on modern French usage seem to have strayed in from the classroom.

This collection raises a fundamental question. Since many advanced students and other readers of scholarly English books do not read French, to whom is it directed? Not to French readers, who can find the letters in their proper sequence in Dobrée's edition. What would be a service to English readers — who, after all, are the ones most likely to be interested in Chesterfield — is a translation. Even a clumsy one is better than an incomprehensible foreign language. When these letters were originally published in the eighteenth century, their editors also printed English translations. In the twentieth century this is even more desirable.

## A painterly technique

By Andrew Wright

CORNELIA COOK:  
Joyce Cary: Liberal Principles.  
242pp. Vision/Bamea and Noble.  
£12.95.  
0 85478 414 4

In books about the literature of this century, and in discussions of literary movements in learned or other journals, the name of Joyce Cary is seldom mentioned, except in passing. When he died nearly a quarter of a century ago, his reputation suffered the almost inevitable decline that follows upon the death of a well-known author. Nor had Cary ever enjoyed a success of esteem, even in his lifetime. Despite having been championed by such persuasive critics as Walter Allen and Barbara Hardy, his work was never generally regarded as belonging to the highest rank. I remember being told by a don in Oxford — where he lived for nearly forty years — that "Cary is the sort of writer who is read by dons' wives".

After his death his papers and library went begging. The Bodleian Library felt itself unable to afford the modest sum that would have caused them to be acquired and deposited there. Fortunately assistance was forthcoming in the shape of a gift of money from Dr. James M. Osborne of Yale University, thanks to whom the Cary Collection at Bodley is now in place, an invaluable resource for those seeking to understand how Cary's views were formed, how he composed his works, and what lay behind them in the way of notes, drafts, revisions. The admirable assiduity of Barbara Fisher in arranging and cataloguing these papers has already made such study feasible, as she herself has demonstrated in her own book, *Joyce Cary: The Writer and His Theme* (1980). Cornelia Cook has also made use of the Cary Collection to good purpose in the book under review.

It should be said at once that Cook succeeds in providing a reading of the novels (except the three early African novels, which she leaves to M. M. Malouf, of whose *Joyce Cary's Africa* (1964) she speaks admiringly) that is clear and revealing — particularly valuable where she has made use of notes toward and early drafts of the manuscripts, and where she has studied the annotations of books in Cary's library as these bear on his own literary development. She is, however, somewhat puzzling in her placement of Cary as a Liberal: she argues that he belongs to the era of transformed Liberalism of 1900-1914, that he is in fact an Edwardian Liberal novelist writing in the middle of the century. Anarchically this is not impossible, but as he was born in 1888 he was a very young Edwardian. Moreover, and more important, by the time his first novel was published, in 1932, he had read and was considerably influenced by the giants among his contemporaries, Proust most strongly, D. H. Lawrence, Joyce. While overlooking all these influences Cook places him as an Edwardian for the plausible but insufficient reason that a number of his principal characters flourished in the period 1900-1914.

There is a sympathetic and illuminating account of *Castle Corner*, showing how it prefigures in certain of the characterizations the later work, and how it fails — as Cary knew it failed — as the first volume in a trilogy that remained (in volumes two and three) merely projected. Cook's pairing of *Master Johnson* and *Charley's My Darling* is useful because the heroes of each are brilliant primitives; and they are primitives on account of a lack of education — fatally lacking for Mister Johnson the Nigerian and very troublesomely for the Cockney ovesee Charley. Both have strongly ardent temperaments. Both are displaced, Johnson by the vicarization that colonialism necessarily entails, Charley by his withdrawal from his native London to exotic Devonshire. In these two novels Cary is much more successful than in *Castle Corner*, and Cook ascribes this success to the "substitution of physical appearance, gesture and speech for authorial explana-

tion". What Cary learned was to put his knowledge of painterly technique to work in the construction of novels; the splendidly visual quality here, and of his later work as well, is surely a fact to be remarked in coming to understand their effectiveness.

Also, as Cary learned his art, he came to appreciate and to practise economy of means: by way of a study of two of the rejected conclusions of *Master Johnson*, both of them wordily didactic, Cook shows that, in dissociating himself from both Johnson and Rudbeck, in favour of the dramatic and rather spare ending which is in the published version, Cary strengthened his focus on Johnson himself, leaving the use of the present tense in both these novels is praised as enabling Cary to distinguish the "spontaneity of a childish nature from the adult world of motive, plan and guilt". She is right too to point out that Johnson and Charley prefigure Guilely Jimsoo — just as Rudbeck prefigures Wilcher and Latter in the first and second trilogies.

A *House of Children* "stands as a transitional point", and perhaps the most interesting aspect of this chapter on a novel which is not among Cary's best, is the demonstration, by way of Cary's reading of Proust, of the application of Proust's techniques to the writing of one of his own novels, a technique refined in *To be a Pilgrim*.

In her treatment of the two trilogies, Cook offers interpretations with which not all will agree, or which could be presented more fully; but her readings are always reasonable, and — founded as they are on a study of the manuscript sources — illuminating of the final versions of the novels. It is possible to wish that she had dealt more historically with Cary's romantic view of the artist, along the lines proposed by Hazard Adams in a work which she lists in her bibliography. It is possible to disagree with her assertion that Guilely glimpses rather than contemplates the world. But there is so much gold in the two chapters given over to the two trilogies that one is glad for what is presented rather than dismissed to quarrel with what is omitted. For instance, that Wilcher's ultimate effort is regressive is made clear by the imagery of *To be a Pilgrim* itself; Cook deepens one's understanding of this fact by her account of the manuscript notes. The discussion of Guilely Jimsoo's three paintings, "The Fall", "The Raising of Lazarus", and "The Creation", is especially illuminating.

What is missing in the discussion of both trilogies is the sense of sympathy for all six narrators. Cary has the skill of a great impersonator, as has often been noticed; his capacity for getting into the skin of his characters, besides being a remarkable triumph of technique, defines the breadth and complexity of his style. Also, with respect to the second trilogy, I should say that Cary is not quite so theme-minded as Cook indicates: "The theme of the second trilogy is the ideas of British Liberalism and the downfall of the Liberal party." Surely these ideas and this downfall form the background of the fates of the three principal characters: Cary presents the individual tragedy in these larger historical terms. The treatment of the third novel in the second trilogy, *Not Honour More*, is perhaps the weakest because it is the least sympathetic of all — but it is difficult to like Jim Latter, the right-wing old lie who murders his wife, but describes the act as an execution; to see even Jim Latter in sympathetic terms, though of course not admiring terms, such was the hope, and such for many readers surely, the achievement, even there.

In Volume 8 of the *Dickens Studies Manual: Essays on Victorian Fiction* (359pp. Published by AMS Press, and New York, \$32.50), the editors of the series continue to "solidify and publish the finest examples of research and criticism of Dickens". The present volume also contains essays on Mrs Gaskell, Trollope and Hardy as well as an unpublished manuscript by Thackeray.

## All the Company's men

By C. R. Boxer

Oliver Goldsmith, who had spent some time in Holland, although he was not exactly enamoured of the foggy and soggy Lowlands by the North Sea, observed in his *Citizen of the World* (1760): "When I compare the figure which the Dutch make in Europe with what they assume in Asia, I am struck with surprise. In Asia I find them the great Lords of all the Indian Seas; in Europe the timid inhabitants of a paltry state."

Although the Dutch were in fact no longer "lords of the Indian seas", as recently evidenced by their badly bungled expedition to confront the English in Bengal, which had been easily defeated by Clive and Forde in 1759, yet the Dutch East India Company (VOC) was still the greatest shipping and commercial corporation in the world. Founded in 1602, by the mid-eighteenth century its field of activity in Asia extended from Cape Town to Nagasaki, and from Mocho to the Moluccas. During this century, the VOC had a total of about 20,000 people on its annual payroll, ashore and afloat; but the power in between the two categories varied markedly after it became a territorial power in Ceylon and Java. In 1729 there were some 76 per cent military as against some 24 per cent maritime personnel; but in 1780 these percentages were respectively 93 and 7.

In his article, "Dutch Historiography on European expansion since 1945" in *Reappraisals in Overseas History*, H. L. Wesseling comments that although there is a fairly large number of active researchers on colonial history in the Netherlands, "there is a great quantitative discrepancy between ongoing research on the one hand, and publications on the other". I take leave to doubt this. In any event, there can be no complaint about the quality of the research recently published in this field, as the works under notice testify, apart from many others which are unavoidably omitted. The dynamism of this historical workshop is the Leiden University Centre for the history of European expansion (and of the indigenous reactions to it), several of whose earlier publications were noticed in the survey of Dutch colonial historiography contributed to the *TLS* 11 November 28, 1975.

*Itinerario*, the periodic bulletin of this institution, contains articles in several languages, but the great majority are in English. Its consultation is indispensable for anyone interested in Dutch archival and library resources, and for work in progress in the field of Dutch colonial history. Researchers will find its special issue on the New Ageenem Rijksarchief an invaluable introduction to this admirably organized but at first sight rather daunting equivalent of a combined India Office and Public Record Office.

Readers who may be inclined to take Wesseling's modest disclaimer too seriously, will be disabused by a perusal of the 1980 edition of W. Ph. Coolhaas and G. J. Schutte, *A Critical Survey of Studies on Dutch Colonial History*. This is a greatly enlarged edition of a critical bibliography by the first-named author (and doyen of Dutch colonial historiography) published in 1960. It shows that Dutch scholars and researchers have been far from unproductive during the last twenty years, and only a fraction of their work since 1975 can be noticed here.

Pride of place must go to the two volumes on *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping, 1595-1795*, even though the first and introductory volume is not due for publication until 1982. Apart from the sixty-six voyages of so-called *Voortcompagnien* (pioneer companies which preceded the VOC), the chronological tables in these two volumes list individually 4,772 outward voyages and 3,359 homeward voyages of Indonesian sent to and from Asia in 1602-1795 (mainly to and from Batavia after 1619). The last homeward voyage took place in 1795, and the VOC itself was formally dissolved three years later. The tables provide detailed information about each ship, arranged in a dozen (or more) columns for each entry.

They include the name, tonnage (in metric tons), and type of ship; place and year of its construction; dates of its departure and arrival, with any calls (at Cape Town or elsewhere) made en route; numbers of the crew, soldiers, and passengers on board; casualties from storm or battle, or from disease. The invoice-values of the return-cargoes are given, where available, as also the names of ship, squadron, and fleet commanders, and information on how and where the ship met her end. Each individual voyage is given a serial number, thus facilitating cross-references, as do the very full indexes of ship's names, personal names, and geographical names.

The outward-bound fleets of 1602-50 averaged thirteen Indianmen a year, this figure rising to a yearly average of twenty-two in 1650-1700. The first half of the eighteenth century was the busiest period, with a yearly average of thirty-three ships. There was then a decline, though not a drastic one, to a yearly average of twenty-three ships during the second half of the eighteenth century. Homeward-bound fleets were usually rather smaller, as some Indianmen remained in Asia to engage in the interport trade. The average complement of seamen and soldiers in an outward-bound Indianman was 180 in the seventeenth century, and 230 in the eighteenth. Most of these men signed on for a period of five years, rates of pay being low, nine guilders a month for the basic rate, which remained unchanged. The death-rate among the VOC personnel was high, especially during the period 1730-95, when Batavia was heavily infected by endemic malaria. Throughout the whole existence of the VOC, it can be assumed that hardly one in three of those who embarked for the East lived (or chose) to return to the Netherlands. This involved a continual drain on the labour-market not merely in the Netherlands, but in Germany and Scandinavia, whence many soldiers and sailors were recruited.

The methods of recruiting this "cannon-fodder", and the conditions of shipboard life, including the discipline (often very harsh), provisions, medical and spiritual services (such as they were) formed the subjects of five articles by the Dutch archivist, J. de Hullu, in 1913-14. De Hullu's sources were mainly the archival records in the Netherlands — he never visited Batavia — supplemented by the copious travel literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which contain numerous eyewitness accounts of life on board. Many of them were by German soldiers, and some of them are very angry. Perhaps none of them quite attain the compulsive readability of our own Edward Barlow and William Hickey, both of whom, incidentally, made homeward-bound voyages in Dutch Indianmen, the former as a prisoner-of-war from Batavia in 1674, and the latter as a bibulous passenger at the captain's table in the *Held Woltemade* from Cape Town in 1780. It is interesting to compare Hickey's account with the journal of two Dutch ladies bound from Cape Town to the Texel in 1751 in the VOC ship *Leifde*, extracts from which were published by G. J. Schutte in the *Mededelingen van de Nederlandse Vereniging voor Zeegechiedenis*, 36 (1978). These ladies likewise did ample justice to the four daily meals provided (including afternoon-tea), apart from tea and coffee with substantial snacks whenever they felt like it. For the crew, it was a very different story. Their rations might be adequate on paper, but they were often sub-standard in practice, whether because of unavoidable deterioration or the dishonesty of skippers and pursers. De Hullu's five articles have now been reprinted with an excellent introduction, notes, and appendices by J. R. Bruijn and J. Lucassen. The editors give additional information about social-economic conditions in the working-classes from which the men were recruited, and developments in the labour-market which

helped to keep the basic wages so low for two hundred years.

The deterioration of the VOC's maritime strength in Asia, despite the increase in the number of Indianmen plying between the Netherlands and Batavia, is reflected in the correspondence of the Governor-General and their Councils with the governing board of Directors, the "Heeren XVII", or Gentlemen Seventeen in Europe. (Previous volumes in this series were reviewed in the *TLS* on November 28, 1975.) The two volumes under notice, admirably edited as hitherto by W. Ph. Coolhaas, are particularly interesting. They cover a period about which relatively little has been published, since the "English Factories in India" seem to have bogged down at 1682, and the published volumes of the *Batavian Dag- en Week-Register* (Diary) likewise end in 1682. Inevitably, the VOC is the centre of the universe in this correspondence; and the writers strive, not always successfully, to place themselves in the best possible light as upright, tireless, and devoted servants of their masters in the Netherlands. But a great deal of incidental information about Asian commercial, political, and social conditions can be gathered, particularly about Java, Ceylon, Bengal, Coromandel, and Western India. The VOC also kept a sharp eye on its European and Asian competitors. This correspondence therefore contains many allusions to English, French and Portuguese activities from South-East Africa to Timor, as well as to Chinese competitors and collaborators in Indonesia and South-East Asia.

The century of the VOC occurred in 1702, and there was some excuse for the euphoria among the directors, which was reflected in the gold and silver medals which they struck to celebrate the occasion. Batavia was obviously more entitled to her self-assumed role as "Queen of the Eastern Seas" than Bombay, Madras, Pondicherry, or Goa would have been. But the decline in the maritime strength of the VOC was becoming obvious. The government of Batavia noted gloomily in 1704, that whereas the Company then had a total of eighty-one sail in Asia, thirty years earlier there had been 124.

The Governor-General and council of Batavia were also bedevilled by internal disputes and personal rivalries, which sometimes led to violent verbal clashes at council meetings and to abrupt changes of policy. For instance, the Governor-General Matthijs de Haan (1725-29) destroyed many of the coffee and other plantations which had been encouraged by his predecessors, Abraham van Riebeeck (1709-13) and Hendrick Zwaardoon (1720-25). He also drastically cut the price paid to the Javanese producers, although charging the Company the old price for the coffee grown on his own plantations. Dr. Coolhaas extols Zwaardoon as a "strong leader, capable, energetic, excellent." This tribute complements that of his eighteenth-century biographer (Du Bois, 1763), who termed him "un homme du beau monde, galant, agréable, splendide." He was certainly a capable and energetic administrator, whether at Jaffna, Surat, or Batavia. But he was also a sadistic monster. He was mainly responsible for the singularly barbarous torture, trial and execution of the luckless European burgher, Pieter Erberveid, and over a score of even bumpier victims, who were in all probability quite innocent of the manifestly absurd plot for a general rising of which they were accused in 1722.

Possibly the fear of the lower orders, sometimes evoked by the government at Batavia was not unconnected with the increase in mayhem and mutiny aboard VOC shipping in the eighteenth century. De Hullu had already given some attention to this problem in his articles. It has now been re-examined and analysed in greater depth and scope by J. R. Bruijn and E. S. Van Eyck van Heslinga in their well-illustrated and well-documented

book on mutiny and disorders, and the trial and punishment of the offenders. One of the incidents narrated at some length is the mutiny of Chinese sailors on board the homeward-bound Indianman *Jura* in the Indian Ocean on Christmas Eve, 1783. Among those killed in this bloody tragedy was J. C. M. Rademacher, a protagonist of the Dutch "Enlightenment" and founder of the Society of Arts and Sciences (and of Freemasonry) at Batavia. One of the surviving passengers, Dominie Metzlar, whose wife was among the victims, had no doubt that the blame lay on the ship's officers for their harsh treatment of the Chinese among the crew. It may be added that it was not only Asian sailors who were harshly treated. The Swedish botanist, C. P. Thunberg, observed that even the Japanese officials at Nagasaki were critical of the readiness of the Dutch ship's officers to enforce their orders with blows and curses on European and Asian sailors alike.

The China Trade of the VOC has not hitherto attracted as much attention as that of our East India Company, although Dr. H. van Santen's annotated edition of François Pelsaert's oft-quoted accounts of Mughal India in 1627 supersedes the earlier and shorter English version by W. H. Moreland and Pieter Geyl, *Jahangir's India. The Remonstrance of François Pelsaert* (Cambridge, 1925). Ashin Das Gupta has followed up his admirable *Malabar in Asia Trade, 1740-1780* (1967) with a complementary study of trading conditions at Surat at a slightly earlier period. Likewise mainly based on VOC archival sources, it forms another major contribution to the social-economic history of western India and the Indian Ocean in the early modern period. Written in his low-key but urbanely witty style, Das Gupta analyses with a sure touch the complicated wheeling and dealing between a cast of colourful and often devious characters. They include Robert Cuwan (bankrupt Lisbon merchant who made a second fortune by private trade at Surat and Bombay), his VOC "opposite number" at Surat, Pieter Poonen, the Turkish merchant-adventurer, Abdul Gafar, who became the wealthiest man in Surat for a time, and their indispensable but likewise expendable Hindu *Banians*. As Das Gupta has written elsewhere: "the evidence of the eighteenth century is also such that we can look closely, even minutely, at concrete situations. The moment we are able to do this, large entities like 'the Dutch Company', 'the Mughal', and even 'the Indian merchant' seem to dissolve in our hands and we are left with men in large and small factions battling for disparate interests."

Like all workers in this field, Das Gupta acknowledges his indebted-

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ness to Holten. Furber's seminal *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient, 1600-1800* (1976). The stimulating review-article on this book by M. A. P. Meilink-Roelofs in the *Bi-jdragen TLV*, makes interesting comparisons and contrasts between the VOC and the EIC, including their organization, administration, and trading policies. She also draws attention to current work by Dutch scholars, of which two instances must suffice. Frank Lequin is engaged on a socio-economic analysis of the VOC personnel in Bengal during the eighteenth century, using a computer to extract much new information from the very voluminous original records at the Hague. Leonard Blussé is engaged in a study of the Dutch colonization of Taiwan, 1624-62, for which his knowledge of Dutch, Chinese and Japanese sources gives him exceptional qualifications.

Readers who have no time or in-

clination to tackle all or most of the foregoing works, will find excellent and authoritative surveys of the history of the VOC in Volumes II (pp 246-71) and III (pp 266-84) of the *Maritieme Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, and in Volumes VII (pp 174-219), and IX (pp 427-464), of the *Algemeene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*. Both are superbly illustrated, especially the last, the quality of reproductions being the highest I have ever seen in works of this kind. There is, inevitably, some overlapping of the contributors and the texts between these two publications; and libraries which cannot afford both may prefer to opt for the *AGN*. These two last volumes form a fine evocation of the VOC and a fine advertisement for the EEC, since the illustrations and the text form a harmonious whole as a result of the combined efforts of firms in Holland, Germany and Spain.

Books reviewed in this article are listed on the right.

The first in a series of Occasional Papers in Modern Dutch Studies, (General Editor Professor P. K. King), J. Eisen's study, *Anglo-Dutch Relations and European Unity 1940-1948* (60pp, University of Hull, 0 859 58429 1) was published in 1980. Dr Eisen examines the way in which Dutch foreign policy, influenced by the stance of the British Government during the Second World War and immediately after, developed from neutrality to co-operation and involvement in Europe. Britain's separation from the continent was an axiom of European politics and inherent in the British policy which aimed at a

balance of power and the prevention of hegemony in Europe. Initially, Dutch statesmen ignored traditional British foreign policy and decided to rely on Britain and her mastery of the seas to ensure autonomy and regular contact with Dutch colonies. Britain's reluctance to join Europe without either America or Russia forced the Dutch to accept a European collective security system. Both Dutch and British Governments have provided Dr Eisen with access to previously unpublished sources and documents and she is able to demonstrate the convergence of British and Dutch statesmen to the idea and promotion of European unity.

P. C. EMMER and H. L. WESSELING (Editors): *Reappraisals in Overseas History Essays on Post-War Historiography about European Expansion* 248pp. Leiden University Press.

W. Ph. COOLHAAS and G. J. SCHUTTE: *A Critical Survey of Studies on Dutch Colonial History* 2nd Edition revised and rearranged 270pp. The Hague: Nijhoff.

F. S. GAASTRA, J. R. BRUIJN, and I. SCHÖFFER (Editors): *Dutch-Asian Shipping in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, 1595-1795* Volume 2: Outward-Bound Voyages from the Netherlands to Asia and the Cape, 1595-1794. 765pp.

Volume 3: Homeward-Bound Voyages from Asia and the Cape to the Netherlands, 1697-1795. 626pp. The Hague: Nijhoff.

J. R. BRUIJN and J. LUCASSEN (Editors): *Op de schepen der Oost-Indische Compagnie* Vijf artikelen van J. do Hallu 174pp. Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff/Bouma's Boekhuis.

W. Ph. COOLHAAS (Editor): *Generale Missiven van Gouverneurs-Generaal en Raden aan Heren XVII der Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie* Volume 6: 1698-1713. 1,015pp. Volume 7: 1713-1725. 850pp. The Hague: Nijhoff.

J. R. BRUIJN and E. S. VAN EYCK VAN HESLINGA: *Multery, Oproer en berechting op schepen van de VOC* 182pp. Haarlem: De Boer Maritiem.

C. J. A. JÖRG: *Porselein als handelswaar* De porseleinhandel als onderdeel van de Chinahandel van de VOC 1729-1794 395pp. Groningen: privately printed for the author.

C. J. A. JÖRG: *Pronk Porselein* Porselein naar ontwerpen van Cornelis Pronk 82pp. Groningen Museum.

J. VAN GOOR: *Jan Kompanje als Schoutmaster* Dutch Education in Ceylon, 1690-1795 204pp. Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff.

R. L. BROHIER: *Links between Sri Lanka and The Netherlands* A Book of Dutch Ceylon 169pp. Colombo: Netherlands Alim-ni Association of Sri Lanka. Distributed by M. Nijhoff, The Hague.

D. H. A. KOLFF and H. W. VAN SANTEN (Editors): *De geschriften van Francisco Pelsaert over Mughal Indië, 1627* Kroniek en Remonstrantie 361pp. The Hague: Nijhoff.

ASHIN DAS GUPTA: *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat, c. 1700-1750* 305pp. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag. LEONARD BLUSSÉ and GEORGE WINIUS (Editors): *Itinerario: The New Algemeen Rijk* sarchief Special Issue 1980-2 95pp. Leiden: Centre for European Expansion.

M. A. P. MEILINK-ROELOFS: *De Europese Expansie in Azië* Enkele beschouwingen naar aanleiding van Holden Furber's *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient, 1600-1800* The Hague: Nijhoff.

M. A. P. MEILINK-ROELOFS and others (Editors): *Algemeene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, Vol VII, Nieuwe Tijd 548pp. Vol IX, Nieuwe Tijd 548pp. Haarlem: Fibula-Van Dishoeck.

L. M. AKVELD, S. HART and W. J. VAN HOBOKEN (Editors): *Maritieme Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* Vol II, Zeuatlende eeuw, van 1582 tot c. 1680 389pp. Bussum: De Boer Maritiem.

F. J. A. BROEZE, J. R. BRUIJN and F. S. GAASTRA (Editors): *Maritieme Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* Vol III, Achtentiende eeuw en eerste helft negentiende eeuw, c. 1680-1810 434pp. Bussum: De Boer Maritiem.

# The Dutch and the Afrikaners

By G. J. Schutte

Recently a proposal by the Dutch government to end unilaterally the thirty-year-old Cultural Treaty with South Africa was approved in both the Dutch houses of parliament by a comfortable majority. Terminating that treaty may be a long way from declaring an oil embargo, but according to its supporters it should nevertheless serve as a clear warning to the whites, as well as an encouragement to the blacks of South Africa. And that is what the majority of Dutch politicians, journalists, clergy and anti-apartheid leaders want to see: the Netherlands in the forefront of the crusade against a gutless apartheid regime.

At first sight, it is somewhat surprising that of all countries it should be the Netherlands to don the prophet's mantle. After all, in every Dutch town there is an Afrikaner janitor with Pretorius, Kruger, Steyn and Botha Streets bearing witness to the sympathies of the Dutch during the Boer War. Every Dutch schoolboy can recount with pride how the twenty-year-old Queen Wilhelmina openly expressed this sympathy by sending the warship Gelderland to carry Paul Kruger, that courageous old Transvaal freedom-fighter, safely into exile. Half a century later in 1952 when the Afrikaners celebrated the third centenary of white South Africa, a special KLM flight bore an official Dutch delegation to Cape Town where Prince Bernhard unveiled a statue of Jan van Riebeeck, the gift of the Dutch to the Nationalist government of South Africa. And just as in 1938 when the Great Trek was commemorated, in 1952 the Dutch newspapers produced special South Africa editions in which little or nothing was written about the policy of apartheid but a great deal was written about the common origins and cultural ties of Afrikaners and Dutchmen.

The Cape of Good Hope is the only place where centuries of Dutch colonial activity have produced a truly Dutch settlement. Yet its takeover by the English in 1806 created little stir in Holland, and in the course of the nineteenth century the Dutch Africans virtually vanished below the horizon of Holland's world. Their rediscovery occurred during the rising against England's nonetaxation of the Transvaal in 1880-81. Suddenly the stereotypes of the ignorant, reactionary Boer, who was opposed to converting to Christianity his cruelly used black servants because he did not see them as human, no longer seemed appropriate. Now the Boers were simple, upright, peace-loving heroes; worthy descendants of their Soebagger forefathers, who were defying a world-power with complete faith in God and their rights. The Dutch in their thousands supported addresses to the British people and petitions to Queen Victoria; they contributed tens of thousands of guilders in support of the Transvaal; a lunatic fringe even proposed an Irish-Dutch-Afrikaner entente against the perfidious Albion. Two decades later, during the Anglo-Boer war, there was fervent sympathy for the Boers throughout the whole of Dutch society.

Anti-English sentiments formed a part of the background to this powerful feeling for the Afrikaners. Holland's position in Europe and her colonial empire in South-east Asia depended largely on the goodwill of the English - a bitter pill to swallow for the descendants of De Ruyter. After the secession of Belgium in 1839, the small Dutch population with its stagnating economy had felt inadequate and powerless, and even in 1880 fears for the survival of Dutch culture and of the Netherlands as a state had not entirely been stilled. Nevertheless the Dutch also possessed a powerful will to survive and they saw in the Afrikaners a welcome reinforcement and even an area of expansion for Dutch culture. "South Africa must become for the Netherlands what North America has meant for English civilization",

wrote the contemporary historian Robert Fruin and he set an example by writing chests full of Dutch literature to Pretoria. Sixty years later, another famous historian, Pieter Geyl, became excited by the burgeoning of Afrikaner culture: "I feel such a sense of communion with the Afrikaans-speaking people... Here lies a fruitful field for us to cultivate."

Apart from the period 1881-99 when Holland invested considerable sums of money in Kruger's Transvaal (Kruger, for his part, preferred Hollanders even to Cape Afrikaners), economic relations between the Netherlands and South Africa have never amounted to very much - perhaps two per cent of each other's external trade. Cultural relations, on the other hand, have certainly been important. The bond which links the Dutch and the Afrikaners can be summed up in the word "kinship": a common origin, language, culture and religion. The Dutch pro-Boer movement, which after 1881 was incorporated in the Netherlands South African Association (still active), did much to stimulate the Dutch elements within South Africa by, for instance, publishing textbooks for Dutch-language education (which between 1902 and 1907 also depended upon financial support from the Netherlands), by sending out teachers and university lecturers and by arranging for Afrikaners to study in the Netherlands. Since 1881 about 1,000 Afrikaner intellectuals - theologians, lawyers, writers, teachers, economists, doctors, historians - have received all or most of their training in the Netherlands. They form a large proportion of that Afrikaner cultural, social and political élite which prepared and finally achieved the development and victory of the Afrikaner in South Africa.

The significance of this Dutch influence upon Afrikaner culture is hard to define precisely: the transference of cultures is not a quantifiable process. However, it is clear from the careers of many Afrikaner intellectuals that acquaintance with Dutch culture was felt to be an enriching experience. They found in it a wealth of forms and techniques, a breadth and depth of cultural development, which their own younger culture lacked. Holland provided them both with a window and with an entrance to modern Western civilization. Nevertheless the question remains: what typically Dutch qualities and characteristics did they take back with them to South Africa? A visiting Dutch marine officer in about 1895 called the Transvaal "Holland's most beautiful colony". And with good reason. At least 15 per cent of Transvaal officials, and in some departments more than half, were then of Dutch descent. The weighty, formal and legalistic behaviour of the South African bureaucracy seems to be one aspect of that inheritance. One of the departments which the Dutch dominated was that of education: the Transvaal education laws were modelled on the Dutch example, and the majority of the personnel, from the superintendent to the schoolmaster in the most isolated country school, were the product of Dutch teacher-training. That education was similar to that in Holland in that it was Christian, paid great attention to the national language (High Dutch), and aimed at strengthening national consciousness (Afrikaner nationalism versus English imperialism). After the downfall of the Boer republics Dutch influence was considerably reduced, though its effect continued to be felt for a long time afterwards, in the Afrikaner universities as well as the schools.

Until about 1920 Afrikaner journalism was much influenced by Dutchmen, a notable example being Dr F. V. Engelenburg, editor of *Die Volksstem* and founder of the Afrikaners Academy of Arts and Science. The subservience of the Afrikaner

churches to Holland was even more striking. Theologians from all three Afrikaner churches studied in the Netherlands, were strongly influenced by Dutch Protestant theology, and organized their churches and theological training along Dutch lines. This applied particularly to the Reformed churches and Potchefstroom University, which were virtual copies of the Orthodox-Reformed (*Gereformeerde*) churches in Holland and the Free University of Amsterdam respectively; it was also true of the Universities of Pretoria, Stellenbosch and Bloemfontein.

The orientation of Afrikaner education, churches and universities towards Holland and the effect which an education in Holland had upon their leaders has tempted Irving Hexham, in his "Afrikaner Nationalism 1902-14" in *Warwick and Spies, The South African War* (1980), to seek the origins of Afrikaner Christian-nationalism and the philosophy of apartheid in the Netherlands, and in particular within the Orthodox-Reformed churches and the so-called Anti-Revolutionary movement of Dr A. Kuiper. Hexham's argument is absorbing but one-sided. He exaggerates the similarities and minimizes the differences between the various Dutch and Afrikaner groups under discussion and he narrows the history of apartheid by reducing it to an exclusively Potchefstroom affair, thereby omitting, for example, the contribution of the Cape. Nevertheless, he is right to stress the importance of Dutch influence on Afrikaner culture and philosophy. But the answer has to be rather broader than his; even if less precise. The Afrikaner's way of thinking, his nationalism, his perception of himself, society and other races, was formed in the nineteenth century independently of direct Dutch influence. The Dutch had exerted influence on the forms which those ideas have taken but not on their content. The earliest expressions of modern Afrikaner nationalism, culturally via the Society of True Afrikaners (1875), politically in the proclamations of the Transvaal Triumvirate (1880), were formulated by men like Pannevis, S. J. du Toit and Jorissen - Hollanders, or in the case of du Toit, powerfully influenced by Holland. That need not surprise us, for in Afrikaner society they were the only men with any intellectual training, and consciously or unconsciously they naturally betrayed their Dutch background in their writings. They belonged to an old nation which was at that time in the grip of a virulent political and cultural nationalism, so the concepts of independence and free development of a national culture were commonplace to them.

The pattern of Afrikaner thought was cast partially in Dutch words and forms. Holland's contribution to the formulation of Afrikaner nationalism was therefore by no means insignificant. On the other hand, it was neither consistent interference in South Africa nor the monopoly of Protestant orthodoxy in Holland, for liberal religious and political groups also played their part nor was it fundamental. The same applies to the influences experienced by Afrikaners during their studies in Holland; each had his own attitudes, his own level of absorption and assimilation of Dutch influence. In any case, nationalism in Holland and South Africa differed so much that it was impossible to apply unadulterated Dutch ideas to South Africa. Furthermore, the actual introduction of the policy of apartheid occurred at a time when Dutch influence had virtually ended.

Against the traditional background of widespread sympathy for the Afrikaner in Holland and the interweaving of the Dutch and Afrikaner cultural and academic worlds, the shift in Dutch-South African relations in the early 1960s might seem to have been unexpected, unintelligible and unusually abrupt and radical.

During the 1950s, which saw the signing of the Cultural Treaty, and Holland's participation in the van Riebeeck celebrations, relations seemed as good as ever. The interchange of students, academics and artists reached, perhaps even surpassed, pre-war levels. General Smuts had received an honorary doctorate in Leiden and the appointment of his Nationalist successor, Malan, an alumnus of Utrecht University, had been cordially received in Holland. Literary and historical journals devoted much attention to Afrikaner culture and science, and N. P. van Wyk Louw, Afrikanerdom's most important poet and distinguished intellectual leader, held the chair of Afrikaners Language and Literature at the University of Amsterdam.

Then, in 1960, the Shepville massacre occurred. The Dutch parliament admonished the South African Assembly by letter, urging it to adopt non-racial policies. Five years later, the Dutch Conservative Minister of Foreign Affairs, Joseph Luns, donated Dfl100,000 to the Defence and Aid fund for victims of apartheid, an example followed personally by Queen Juliana. Diplomatic exchanges with Pretoria became increasingly critical and a medium for admonition and warning; anti-apartheid groups received government subsidies; the promotion of emigration ceased (the post-war exodus had taken 45,000 Dutchmen to South Africa); the Cultural Treaty was "frozen" and diplomats were sent off to investigate the possibility of joint European action against South Africa. The situation today is that universities in the Netherlands now turn South African visitors away; sporting and cultural meetings no longer take place, the churches deny the name of Christian to their white co-religionists in South Africa, and journalists write about the racist minority dictatorship in Pretoria. Within twenty years, the country's special relationship with South Africa has been fundamentally altered.

It is, of course, almost-sighted to call this change unexpected and unintelligible. The pro-German attitude to some Afrikaners during the Second World War, and the electoral victory of the Nationalist Party based on slogans of apartheid and racial domination, had raised many questions in Holland even though the domestic problems of the post-war years left little opportunity for deeper consideration. In the 1950s, as apartheid policies began to take firmer shape, so criticism increased. Furthermore, the generation which had grown up during the Boer War had lived through the Afrikaner cultural revival was dying out during this period. The younger generations did not share such memories and had quite different interests and ideas. The Second World War had made the Dutch very sensitive about any form of racism and nobody wished to be associated with it, particularly as the numbers of non-whites within the Netherlands increased. The traumatic decolonization of Indonesia made many acutely sensitive to all vestiges of colonialism, while the experience of German Nazism had aroused repugnance for any form of extreme nationalism or authoritarian, conservative-patriarchal, political or social philosophy. Moreover, the 1960s saw the virtual end of the old Dutch *verzuim* (literally, "pillared") society, a unique system in which organized religions and social groups (eg orthodox Protestants, Roman Catholics, liberals and socialists etc) had an independent corporate existence - a state of affairs which could be seen as bearing a superficial resemblance to the *apartheid* system of South Africa. But the establishment of the welfare state, together with the spread of affluence, permissiveness, socialization, and the modernization of the churches, increasingly highlighted the differences between the Netherlands and South Africa where, under the Afrikaners, time seemed to have stood still. Hendrik Verwoerd and

## Anglo-Dutch comparisons

By Christopher Brown

W. KUYPER: *Dutch Classicist Architecture* 615pp. Delft University Press. 0 90 3275 040 0.

English visitors to Holland in the middle years of the seventeenth century were struck by the beauty of the towns. Robert Moody, a servant in the service of Banieler Maynard, was there in the winter of 1661-62: "Having seen everything in Amsterdam which was most rare at the Stethaus, the Change, all the best churches, the Jewish Synagogue, and innumerable of brave Palaces, and to tell the truth I think it to be the most famous Merchant Town in Europe except London, but for neatness and faire buildings it goes beyond it." At just the time of Moody's visit the bravest of the merchant palaces, the Trippenhuis on the Kloveniersburgwal with its seven-bay classical facade dominated by a giant Corinthian order and richly decorated with swags and an ornate frieze, was being built to the designs of Justus Vingboons.

Sir William Temple, who had served as British ambassador in The Hague between 1668 and 1670, was particularly impressed by "... the Beauty, Convenience and sometimes Magnificence of all Public works, to which every man pays as willingly, and takes as much pleasure and vanity in them, as those of other Countries do in the same circumstances, among the Possessions of their Families, or private Inheritance." The Town Hall of Amsterdam, the greatest of these public works, which as Temple noted are such a special feature of Dutch society in the seventeenth century, was rising on the Dam during the 1650s and 1660s to the plans of Holland's leading classicist architect, Jacob van Campen. The ambassador, an admirer of Dutch efficiency, was surprised to discover that the Town Hall was running behind schedule, but thought this might be "perhaps a little to relieve the experiment of a current Prediction. That the Trade of that City should begin to fall in the same year, as it did at Antwerp."

In the event the prediction proved painfully accurate, but earlier in the century Holland's remarkable economic expansion prompted extensive

building, both private and public, and Dutch architects led by Van Campen developed a vigorous form of classicism in which to embody the boyish self-confidence of the rulers of the young Republic. With the exception of Katherine Frenault's magisterial account of the Amsterdam Town Hall, Dutch classicist architecture has received relatively little attention in either Dutch or English when compared, for example, to the painting of that remarkable period. The relevant volume in the Polican History of Art devotes 370 pages to painting and only fifty to architecture.

A comprehensive survey is long overdue and this is what Wouter Kuyper promises in the subtitle of his book: "A Survey of Dutch Architectural Relations from 1625 to 1700." He begins with a consideration of the developments of the early years of the seventeenth century, which he characterizes in one of his chapter headings as "an abortive attempt at the Baroque". A chapter is devoted to Hendrick de Koyser, another to Dutch churches and a third to their influence on Wren's ecclesiastical architecture. At the centre of the book is his treatment of "The Architects of the Classicist Period", with chapters on Jacob van Campen, Pieter Post, Arent van 's-Gravesande, Daniel Stalpaert and Justus and Philips Vingboons. That is followed by a section on country-houses and gardens and the last thirty years of the century. Finally, there is an immense, valuable corpus of illustrations, which in almost 300 pages of plans, engravings, drawings and photographs presents a comprehensive visual survey which cannot be found elsewhere.

Kuyper's text, however, is too poorly organized, too imprecise in its definition of classicism and, above all, too idiosyncratic in its opinions to provide a reliable account. Some of these weaknesses may be attributable to the genesis of the book, which began as a study of the influence of Dutch architecture on English architecture during the seventeenth century. Although he subsequently changed the scope of the book, Kuyper appears to have been reluctant to omit his Anglo-Dutch comparisons: this provides a constantly recurring theme which has the effect of unbalancing his account of Dutch classicism, where prop-

ortunate space should have been devoted to Italian and French influences. The last chapter, a catalogue of the printed sources of Dutch architecture available to the English, sits particularly uneasily as a tail-piece to his survey.

That reciprocal architectural exchange between Britain and Holland took place in the seventeenth century is well-known. Constantijn Huygens's stay in London, during which he saw the Queen's House and the Banqueting House, and may well have met their architect, was important for the evolution of Dutch classicism, which had its beginnings in the circle of humanist *dilettanti* at the Orange Court in The Hague. It was Huygens who promoted the careers of Van Campen and of his protégé, Pieter Post, securing the commissions for the Mauritshuis and the Noordhooft Palace for Van Campen and that of the Huys ten Bosch for Post. The relationship between Huygens and Van Campen (and later Post) seems to have been truly collaborative; Huygens designed his own house in The Hague but, as he had the modesty to admit in his own published account of it, "When Van Campen by chance viewed the foundations, he asked that nothing should be raised on them without consulting him, in order to avoid the mistakes which had been made in the stables." A Secretary to the Stadholder, Huygens, who assembled the finest architectural library in Holland, was closely involved in the building of the Mauritshuis and the other Orange residences at this crucial moment in the development of Dutch classicism. (Incidentally, Kuyper seems to be unaware of J. J. Tarkenton's important study of the Mauritshuis in *Ed. E. van den Boogaart Johan Maurits van Naussau-Stegen 1604-1669* The Hague, 1979, pp 54-141, which supersedes much of his account.)

Some years later, during the Commonwealth, English royalist exiles, noblemen and architects travelled in the Netherlands and on their return home built in a style which reflected their enthusiasm for Dutch classicism. Sir Roger Pratt at Colestide and Hugh May at Ethelham Lodge are the best-known examples. Documented exchanges such as these are not, however, enough for Kuyper, who detects widespread Dutch influence in England without having sufficiently explored the possibility that architectural similarities may rather be due to common Vitruvian, or

Italian or French sources. In particular, he is eager to stress the Dutch influence on Wren. As Wren is not known to have visited Holland, Kuyper - in a characteristic exercise in wishful thinking - nominates Robert Hooke as intermediary: Hooke "may have been in Holland shortly before 1672, and would have taken an interest in both Classicist and the more Baroque buildings." (My italics). As he struggles to substantiate Wren's dependence on Dutch models, his arguments become increasingly specious.

When Christopher Wren built Drury Lane Theatre he certainly knew that Jacob van Campen's 1637 *Schouwburg* had already been demolished because it was not sufficiently deep for Baroque staging. There were no prints of the now *Schouwburg* (1665, by Vingboons) but through oral communication he would have known that it did not contain a royal box - so that the perspective was not rigidly centralized - or seats and boxes on the stage, as the public was not admitted there.

Since all that remains of the Drury Lane Theatre is a single disputed drawing, this whole shaky structure rests on equally shaky foundations. Far too much of Kuyper's argumentation is of this type, based on flimsy evidence, unverifiable speculation and slight similarities. In his treatment of Dutch architecture, Kuyper is far too restricted by style labels. This causes him, for example, to do an injustice to Hendrick de Kuyser, the architect of that masterpiece of Dutch ecclesiastical architecture, the Westerkerk in Amsterdam. He writes that De Kuyser's "fate as an architect was essentially tragic: he was unable to develop a harmonious style in a climate characterized by the controversy between traditional influences and dawning classicism." A little further on, he writes that "the prints of the *Architectura Moderna* epitomize De Kuyser's Late Mannerist work with its tendencies towards the Baroque and its flashes of Classicism." In fact the only real tragedy of De Kuyser's reputation as an architect is that until relatively recently it has been blighted by the inability of architectural historians to pin a convenient label on him. Those who can look past the labels at the Westerkerk and the Zuiderkerk can see a wonderfully inventive and entirely successful artist. Kuyper's laboured approach finds

no place for an adequate discussion of classicist town-planning. In The Hague, for example, Huygens and Van Campen would seem to have had a grand view of a *cité idéale*, a point which has been made forcibly by J. Tavernier in his review of this book in the *NRC Handelsblad* (June 5, 1981). A survey of Dutch architecture of the seventeenth century should take especial note of the nature of Dutch society, a society unlike that anywhere else in Europe, having been transformed by the dramatic emergence of the north Netherlands from a distant province of the Habsburg Empire to a leading commercial and military power. This Kuyper largely fails to do; nor, with the exception of a few clumsy clichés ("The Classical Revolution" did not penetrate every region of art and thought with equal rapidity and thoroughness, in painting we have only to compare the academic formalism adopted by a court painter like Honthorst with the full-blooded realism of Frans Hals. Then there were extremes like Rembrandt, who overtly and subliminally clung to emblematic subjects..."), does he relate classicism in architecture to similar currents in the other arts, particularly painting and sculpture.

Kuyper's account of Dutch classicism lacks focus. His definition, stated without argument, begs far more questions than it usefully answers. "Dutch classicism is non-Baroque in its rejection of the centralizing authoritarian feeling, to its acceptance of the role of the onlooker," he writes. In the process of writing the present article the term Classicist is used for the distinctive style of the classical Dutch style of about 1625-75. This architecture of about 1625-75, this style is unduly involved and has little, its narrative flow. Although there are end-notes which are often discursive, the book has no bibliography, an extraordinary omission in a volume of this scope (and one that is published by a university press).

However, despite such weaknesses, Kuyper has performed a valuable service to students of Dutch architecture in bringing together not only a magnificent amount of widely dispersed information, and in adding significantly to it. His chapters on Dutch gardens contain much that is new and are of great topical interest in view of the current restoration of the gardens at Het Loo.

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## Indonesian inheritance

By Keith Foulcher

PRAMOEDYA ANANTA TOER:

Bumi Manusia  
1980pp.  
Anak Senja Bangsa  
353pp. Jakarta: Hasta Mitra.

At the beginning of 1965, the novelist Pramoedya Ananta Toer was one of the leading figures of a movement which aimed to foster the development of a committed socialist art and literature in Indonesia. By the end of that year, he, along with an officially-estimated 120,000 others, was facing indefinite detention as a political prisoner. His gift, like that of most of his fellow detainees, lay in his association with an organization having connections with the Indonesian Communist Party, the alleged instigator of the coup of September 30, 1965. The bloody annihilation of the Communist Party and its following was a part of the process which saw the demise of Indonesia's first president, Sukarno, and the rise to power of the "New Order" under President Suharto.

Pramoedya remained imprisoned without trial in an internment camp on the island of Buru in East Indonesia for fourteen years. At the end of 1979 he, and other prisoners in his "category", were released under mounting international pressure on the Indonesian government. Recalcitrant to the end, Pramoedya was quoted as telling reporters on his release that he intended to continue to write, and was unconcerned about his prospects for publication. He brought with him from Buru a number of manuscripts completed during the last years of his imprisonment, including four sequential historical novels entitled *Bumi Manusia* (Man's Estate), *Anak Senja Bangsa* (Child of All Nations), *Jalan Lengkong* (Steps Forward), and *Rumahnya* (Glasshouse). All of these novels had originally been composed as oral literature, stories related to fellow

prisoners in the early years of his imprisonment when Pramoedya was unable to write. This was the time when a top Indonesian general is reputed to have said, "He is allowed to write, but he has no pen and paper."

In August 1980, the first of these novels, *Bumi Manusia*, appeared throughout Java. It was published by a tiny company headed by the former director of a left-wing newspaper, himself a political prisoner who had been released along with Pramoedya in 1979. Within two weeks, the first printing of 10,000 copies was sold out. It was clear that Pramoedya was "back". Not only had he survived fourteen years of extreme mental and physical deprivation with his mind and spirit intact but in *Bumi Manusia* he had produced what was, by many, the Indonesian novel. It was the first time an Indonesian novelist had addressed the complex historical circumstances which underlay the idea of an Indonesian nation-state, and the notion of an "Indonesian" identity. Pramoedya had done so, moreover, in a way that gave these concerns an immediate popular appeal.

The novel is written in the form of a first-person narrative, and is built around the struggle for personal identity which the progressive idealism of European liberal thought provoked in a small number of Dutch-educated "natives" in the Indies around the turn of the twentieth century. It was a struggle which, within two decades, was translated into political action, as representatives of this Dutch-educated intelligentsia became leaders of a populist nationalist movement. The psychological and intellectual processes involved in Indonesian nationalism were complex. On the one hand, those leading the movement wanted to see an end to those indigenous cultural mores which Western values had led them to perceive as "feudal" and humiliating to human dignity. This had to be reconciled, however, with the knowledge that the very Western culture which could so liberate con-

sciousness in the name of individual freedom, was holding the people of the Netherlands Indies in a continuing grip of exploitation and oppression.

In *Bumi Manusia*, Pramoedya subjects these contradictions to creative examination. He shows the defeat of the initiatives with Western science and learning, and their own discovery, in the face of the political and economic realities of imperialism. The message, if there is one in the novel, is that while education may begin to challenge the exercise of hegemony in colonial (or perhaps, any) society, changed consciousness is, by itself, powerless in the face of the brutal and inhuman exercise of material power. Minkes, the central character in the novel, denies the hierarchically-ordered and status-conscious world of his Javanese aristocratic heritage in favour of allegiance to the Dutch-instilled notions of egalitarianism and individual freedom. At the end of the narrative, however, having severed his links with his own heritage, he is betrayed and his life thrown into ruin, solely because his "native" status gives him an legal power to challenge crimes being perpetrated against him under European law. He, and those about him who have carried the promise of the liberal ethic - racial equality - to its logical conclusion, and have begun to live on equal footing with the Dutch, ultimately discover that they are living far ahead of the historical realities of their time.

The issues are complex, but the novel is not tedious, any more than it was purely a historical romance. Rather, it was modelled stylistically on the rare, spoken-language style of the popular commercial literature which had evolved in Indonesia during the years of Pramoedya's imprisonment, and which he had learnt from the light, "innocuous" reading material permitted to political prisoners. In interviews given after the appearance of the novel, Pramoedya stated that he had adopted these stylistic conventions, which he had

bravely only at a distance, quite deliberately. *Bumi Manusia* was for modern Indonesia: it had, therefore, to be written in a manner which would reach the widest possible audience of Indonesian youth.

Reaction to *Bumi Manusia* was widespread, and almost unanimously favourable. It included a commendation from the Vice-President, Adam Malik, who remarked that the novel might be required reading in Indonesian schools and universities. It came as a surprise to many, therefore, when several weeks after the publication, the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Education and Culture, Sutanto Wirjoprasanto, announced a ban on the novel, to apply to all employees of his department. The Supreme Court was said to be examining an accusation that *Bumi Manusia* contained elements of "class conflict", and as such was a potential hazard to society. Before the end of the year, however, the sequel to *Bumi Manusia*, and the second novel in the planned series of four, was on open sale.

*Anak Senja Bangsa* indicated the trend which Pramoedya's overall design was to take. For in this novel, the search begins for a forward-looking Indonesian consciousness which will be more firmly rooted in the realities of its historical condition. Both the enthusiastic embracing of the modern world and the denial of the indigenous cultural heritage, which in *Bumi Manusia* led only to betrayal and defeat, now begin to be re-appraised. The result is, on the one hand, a progression through the alternative models of modernization which at the close of the nineteenth century were being offered by Japan, and in particular by China, back to a reconsideration of Europe. This time, however, it is the lesson offered by European socialism, rather than the idealistic promise of liberalism. At the same time as this intellectual journey is taking place, the indigenous heritage comes gradually to be identified with the peasant base of society, rather than the aristocratic elite of Minkes' ori-

gins. Responding to an accusation by European friends that he does not know his own people, Minkes comes into contact with a Javanese peasant family who are fighting the encroachment of a Dutch sugar plantation onto their land. He struggles through the barriers of class and education which separate him from them, towards an understanding of the basis of the peasant mentality, the "fear and suspicion of all that is not peasant", and he comes to see that it is on the basis of the terrible degradation of peasant families and their means of livelihood that Dutch colonialism has reached its apogee in Java. Clearly, an awareness of historical reality is being shown to demand a more directly politicized consciousness. For if the focus of *Bumi Manusia* is essentially "anti-Dutch", that of *Anak Senja Bangsa* is unquestionably the shift towards an openly "pro-peasant" stance.

The second novel in the series thus developed the thesis to the point of an emerging synthetic view of nationality, and a tentative idealization of the basis for social change in Indonesia. Unfortunately it now appears possible that the future steps in Pramoedya's overall design may remain obscure for some time. For although *Anak Senja Bangsa* did not appear initially to arouse the same interest as its predecessor, either from the public or the authorities, officialdom has recently seen fit to take aggressive action. On May 29, 1981, the Prosecutor-General, Ismail Saleh, announced a general ban on both of Pramoedya's novels, referring to references to a "Marxist-Leninist nature" which were a threat to public order. Pramoedya commented merely that he would not oppose the ban, and hoped the authorities would reconsider the decision. His situation, just eighteen months after his release, may again be precarious. For the rest of the world, the ban serves as an indication that Pramoedya's one major novelist to date still awaits the basic freedom to practise his art, let alone official recognition of it.



The Scottish National Portrait Gallery has recently bought this portrait by Alexander Nanyuth of John Sakeuse, an Eskimo who settled in Leith in 1816. A Christian convert and a keen artist, Sakeuse stayed away with his canoe on a Greenland wharf, intending to study the Bible and drawing in a more hospitable climate. He managed both (Nanyuth himself gave him drawing lessons) and became famous throughout Britain, but he died of typhus only three years after reaching Scotland.

## Hearing hallucinations

By Harold Hobson

Childe Byron  
Young Vic Theatre

Romulus Linney's *Childe Byron*, directed by Frank Dunlop for the Young Vic, must be the most audacious play in London. David Essex's Byron, splendidly noble and romantic in repose (and in movement, too, despite a loyal adherence to Byron's limp), loses not a syllable of his author's often intricate text, which deals with sins that even in the relaxed atmosphere of today would be accounted spectacular. Essex speaks with a startlingly deliberate precision speeches that are as uncompromising and direct in their presentation of sexual and inhuman aberrations as they are astonishingly chaste. In one big set piece, when he is reviled and rejected by the exponents of what the blameless Minculley, with Byron in mind, called a fit of British hypocrisy, Byron descends from the stage and turns upon his accusers with a tirade against this hypocrisy that is delivered in passionately controlled enunciation; and the rest of the cast, including the admirable Sara Kestelman as both Lady Byron and her daughter Augusta Ada, follow David Essex's example of oratorical exactitude even in the throes of approaching death.

The result is mesmerizing, and indeed the play itself is conceived as an hallucination of Ada's as she suffers the final pains of mortal illness. But it induces a considerable difficulty, for whilst the audience's senses are designedly and appropriately affected as if by poppy or mandragora, those senses need to be exceedingly alert. For there is no point in denying that Mr Linney tells an involved story in an extremely complicated way.

Typically he brings about a scene in which Byron, reciting his own poetry, has a homosexual encounter with a young man he has saved from drowning who had a moment before been Byron himself. There is no

transition from one character to the other, and the scene (very delicately done) is further confused by there being for a considerable part of the evening two Byrons on the stage at the same time. Similarly Miss Milbank surprisingly announces her determination to marry Byron a considerable time after the audience supposes that she has already done so. These things are presumably accounted for by the fact that the Byronic story is told in terms of Ada's hallucination; but they are not easily apprehended.

There are some excellent scenes in the play, particularly one in which Miss Milbank confronts the lame lord when he self-pityingly apologizes to her for falling down. Her rustic simplicity is more composed than all the clever chatter of the salons, and when she and Byron fight, as they often do, their words ring around the theatre. Sara Kestelman plays Miss Milbank (Ada's mother, whom she hates) looking as demure as a portrait of Jane Austen, and she speaks with a tongue as barbed as one of Jane Austen's heroines. She gives a fine, amusing, scorching performance, both as Miss Milbank and as her daughter.

The problem that the author sets out to solve is why Ada, hating and loathing her father and her mother, set out in her will that her coffin was to lie in the same grave as Byron's. Nothing in Byron's life, as we are told, explains this. Nothing calls for a charitable judgment upon him. Justice is not outraged by his having been expelled from society, but Linney suggests that Ada was expelled too. She ruined her inheritance, despite her great mathematical ability. She programmed the first-ever computer but was an unsuccessful gambler. She and her father were reckless fellow-beings. That is why they lie side by side, the outcasts of Hucklebury Parish Church, where, says Mr Dunlop, their coffins remain preserved and intact, with the arms of nobility shining upon them, whilst all the rest of that evil family are disintegrating and decayed.

## Romantic logistics

By Judith Chernaik

It is hardly the fault of the South Bank "Romantics" Festival that this cheerful celebration of art and song that almost concurrently with the most serious arts festival, cities have experienced in recent times, George Steiner, opening the festivities, reminded his audience that Romantic art was born out of two immense social and political upheavals, the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution, whose consequences still govern all aspects of modern life. It was Keats, the least recently political of the Romantics, who declared two poets as "those to whom the misery of the world / Are misery, and will not let them rest". And it was salutary to have a living demonstration that to one large, virtually invisible part of society (invisible to the South Bank, certainly), liberty, equality and fraternity are bitter words.

On the other hand, we had Richard Cobb on July 24 arguing that the French Revolution should never have happened, possibly never did happen, and in any case had no effect one way or the other on most people's lives. Revolutionarily rhetoric, he said provocatively, is always meant to deceive - to conceal the "obscene truths" that constitute the revolution. His respectful audience - a mixed lot of tourists and academics - refused to be provoked, which led him, with some embarrassment, to qualify everything he had said, admitting to mischievous intent. It would have been interesting to hear him debating against George Steiner and Germaine Greer, the previous day's speaker, or to see him taken on by Ms Greer's enthusiastic, minnily young, mainly female audience.

The Festival was held in its design, if unpredictable in the event. This five-day jamhore of lectures, recitals, master classes and readings was planned as the start of a four-year grand chronogram survey of

Romanticism. British and international, from 1780 to 1830. Sorting out the programme called for an unromantic logistic skill, as there were nine overlapping events each day. In the interest of sanity I skipped the beginning and end to fight lunch, with assorted speakers, and a comic review, but still had a choice of two lectures ("Explorations" and "The Fine Arts"), three recitals (young British artists at four o'clock each day, young international artists all of them superb - at seven), a "many musical event" (at nine), an afternoon master class, and a miscellaneous category of "poetry, prose, music, and drama" at six - the weakest offering in an otherwise strong programme, at least according to my sample.

Continuity was clearly a problem, as the English Romantic poets featured were by and large unmusical (though they all knew *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*, the greatest of revolutionary musical works), and the only English poets familiar to Schubert and Schumann, who dominated the musical side, were Scott and Byron. It was thus up to the lecturers to explore the relationship between painting and politics, art and image, theme and variation. George Steiner, for example, declared that Romanticism in an "immense transformation of erotic life" (represented musically by Schubert's *Dichterliebe* and Schubert's *Wunderreise*), but lamented the missing half of the story - the direct testimony of women. Germaine Greer tried to fill in the gaps by sketching the lives of several obscure little women. She apologized for relating to spectators to read her text, "Would a man have apologized?" asked my companion. I am pleased to report that Alan Bates did precisely that the following night, before stepping into the role of the poet Byron. Feminism, itself a major theme of the period, often seems another case of the many remaining untouched by the heroic agitation of the few. Germaine Greer seemed dispirited if not exhausted by her

task, fighting battles that should have been won in the 1790s.

My chief reservations concerned the presentation of the spoken word. A two-hour dramatized re-creation of an artist's life and works tends to lose credibility as soon as the actors walk on stage in period costumes. Those who know something about the original are quick to spot a travesty (as a prime instance, Sarah Miles impersonating by turns Mary Shelley and "the mother she never met", Mary Wollstonecraft), and those who come to see that they are being lobbied with simplified and stunted half-truths. Clinging as the smoking-jacketed Alan Bates was to Byron, his heart did not really seem to be in the enterprise; and Frederick Raphael, though an accomplished narrator, had nothing new to add to this oft-told saga. (He also inaccurately played down Byron's brilliant wit in favour of his sentiment and tedious sexism.)

Romantic music is another matter altogether. Jerome Rose, the festival's musical director and a Liszt specialist, opened and closed the proceedings with performances of Schubert, to whose work his bravura technique seemed curiously unsuited. I missed the inwardness of this most poetic of all piano music, its tenderness and lyricism. But certain other musical events provided the kind of memorable experience that justifies the whole project: Ernst Langner, the Swiss tenor, exquisitely rendering each nuance of feeling in Schubert's settings of Heine's love poems; a young French pianist, Brigitte Engerer, playing Chopin with immaculate grace; the West German Chamber Quartet recalling the great years of the Budapest Quartet in their richness of tone, their passion and fire and pure musical concentration.

Next summer the story is to be continued to 1871, with plans for an international academic conference the year after, and (shades of Rousseau) a computerized data bank.

## Churning on the spot

By Richard Combs

The Aviator's Wife  
Academy Cinema One

The eternal triangle has seldom provided such a resilient, or devious, theme as in the films of Eric Rohmer. The six films he made between 1962 and 1972, grouped together as "Contes Moraux", all concern heroes who find themselves caught between commitment and possibility, between long-term satisfaction and short-term temptation. The films are devious in that the heroes' eye for a pretty girl (or some substitute, as the title of the penultimate in the series, *Chère Kucé*, indicates) is equalled by their gift for a pretty turn of phrase. Toying with the possibility of infidelity, these characters seem as excited by their own self-justifying sophistry as they are by the obscure object of desire. What Rohmer has done is to turn Feydeau into a kind of cerebral gymnast whose one is not likely to appreciate unless one can respond to the characters' bad faith. The atmosphere is as rarefied as this makes it sound, and the films ran seem to shiver rather than expand round the stimulating conversation.

*The Aviator's Wife* is the first in what Rohmer sees as a new series called "Comédies et Proverbes". The "action" depends as much as ever on what characters say rather than what they do. But where previously Rohmer has seemed to scorn plot by providing so little of it, here he shows his disdain by making plot work so hard. Coinci-

dences and collisions, mishaps and misunderstandings keep the characters on the go, even if it is the working of their own minds which supplies the real interest. Each of them seems to lead us to the next in a kind of dramatic knock-on effect: A is pursuing B who is involved with C who might be carrying on with D. The end (or beginning) of this sequence is a character we never meet, the one who is ensnared in the title.

Another difference is that the characters are much younger than before. Their talent for self-justification is less developed, even if their need of it is more intense. Perhaps this is why Rohmer has to keep the wheels of the plot so much in motion, while the characters are churning on the spot. François is a twenty-year-old law student who works nights as a post office sorter, meanwhile trying to carry on an affair with Anne, five years his senior, who does not like to be emotionally crowded. Anne has also been involved with Christian, an airline pilot now about to return to Paris for good - and to the wife for whom he feels renewed love since she became pregnant. With both her lovers, Anne is hoist with her own petard, having maintained a prickly independence while dreaming of romantic fulfilment. She expends most of her intellectual energy trying to square her desire for self-sufficiency with her need for emotional commitment. François, equally, has become involved with the stand-offish Anne in defiance of all the evidence that he needs something else entirely. This is teasingly exposed when he meets Lucie, five years his junior, who catches him in the park spying on Christian. Lucie, the youngest but most play-

fully aware of all the rhastricks, joins François in his stork-out and makes a game of the mystery of the unknown blonde with whom Christian spends the day. The pair finally announce that she is his wife and that they are about to get divorced. François learns otherwise during a long argumentative session with Anne, a kind of renegotiation of the terms of their intimacy which still leaves their future uncertain. Rushing to tell Lucie the answer to the mystery, François is witness to another possible betrayal at last, it is this if one assumes that Rohmer has all along meant Lucie and François to get together).

One of the most pleasant things about *The Aviator's Wife* is the way its theatrical business is rhymed with ordinary, day-to-day arrangements. The film is shot in such a plain, neutral fashion that it might almost be a documentary of contemporary Paris. François's job in the post office, the letters sent and trysts made, are conspicuously ironic plot links. But they are also part and parcel of the characters' mundane activities. This is not quite what wells up in song at the end ("Paris has seduced me, betrayed me..."). It is more of a schematic dimension, and at times one feels the film in danger of becoming over-theoretical. This is most obvious in the character of Lucie (Anne-Laure Meury, strenuously winning), who is a little too knowing for the good of the other characters or the balance of the film. The concentration on the flow of talk, for all its intricacy, in the end makes for a kind of tunnel vision, excluding much else from the frame with a simplicity that is close to rigidity.

## Masters of Delft

By Christopher White

CHRISTOPHER BROWN:

Carel Fabritius  
168pp. Phaidon. £30.  
0 7148 2032 6

PETER C. SUTTON:

Pieter de Hooch  
166pp. Phaidon. £48.  
0 7148 1828 3

During recent years the Phaidon Press have produced a number of scholarly monographs on Dutch painters who were largely if not wholly devoted to genre subjects. Books on Vermeer and Oelzevelt have now been followed by studies of Pieter de Hooch by Peter Sutton and Carel Fabritius by Christopher White. These new publications are very welcome, both for the discussion they offer of their chosen artists and the accompanying catalogue raisonnés.

With an indisputable oeuvre of only eight pictures and a scanty biography, albeit with a tragically dramatic end, Carel Fabritius can perhaps count himself fortunate to have a book devoted entirely to him. Both publisher and author - though the latter, it must be said, with the aid of some repetition - have met the challenge, and result is a very attractive, produced book, generously illustrated with details of pictures and all the relevant comparative material as well of course to the accepted works themselves. The letter-press meticulously sets out what is known of the artist's life, supported by publication of all the documents and contemporary biographical accounts, and discusses his oeuvre as well as his critical fortune, which appropriately was revived in the nineteenth century by Vermeer's champion, Théophile Thoré. Barring the chance discovery of some unknown work which might

alter our conception of Fabritius, it can safely be said that Mr Brown's volume will remain the standard work for some time to come on this enigmatic artist.

It is a tribute to the artist that, on the basis of one religious picture, three genre subjects, all very different in character, and four portraits or figure studies, Mr Brown should be able, without the aid of purple prose or fanciful imagination - both of which he firmly eschews - to define Fabritius's personality. He does this by a very thorough investigation of the works, both accepted and rejected, and what has previously been written about them. Brown is very balanced in his approach both to questions of attribution and to interpretations of subject-matter.

Leaving aside a number of works whose only apparent connection with Fabritius must be the unshakeable optimism of their owners, the most serious contenders for acceptance as authentic works, in addition to the indisputable *corpore*, are the three male heads in the Mauritshuis, the Louvre, and the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool. Generally accepted as the work of a single artist, these are probably correctly rejected in the final analysis as being by Fabritius, although they will in all likelihood continue to be loosely associated with his name. The same cannot be said for the "Beholding of St. John the Baptist" or as Brown correctly retitles it, "The Head of St. John the Baptist shown to Salome", in the Rijksmuseum, which ironically was the first "Rembrandt" to be purchased by the Dutch state. Although in the past its attribution to Fabritius had some distinguished supporters, it is now difficult to recognize in it the same hand as that which painted the Warsaw "Raising of Lazarus", which has been more available for study in recent years, and the Amsterdam picture must now join that growing body of works by the anonymous "Rembrandt School".

Mr Brown's catalogue entry on "The Goldfinch", in *The Hague*, cuts a swathe through some of the more fanciful interpretations which that unique picture has had to suffer, although in the end we come no nearer to understanding the artist's purpose. In his extended and perceptive account of "The View in Delft", with a Musical Instrument Seller's Stall", in the National Gallery, Brown demonstrates a Solomonian wisdom in dealing with the two portraits in a recent scholarly dispute about this picture, which should make him a sought-after chairman at future art-historical symposia.

Peter Sutton had a more straightforward and ultimately more rewarding task in writing Pieter de Hooch. The biographical information on the artist may be thin, but there is a solid body of pictures to discuss and catalogue. (Mr Sutton lists 164 accepted works.) Although there have been a number of earlier studies of de Hooch, the present book combines the virtues of Hofstede de Groot's catalogue and the illustrated volume in the *Klassiker der Kunst* series by Wilhelm Valentiner, and adds a good deal of its own. Sutton has produced a highly professional monograph, which displays an impressive knowledge of the pictures and of the literature covering all aspects of Dutch culture. It is one of the merits of the book that the author attempts to study the artist in the widest possible terms.

It must, however, be said that he has an up-to-date way with the English language. Words such as "insightful", "supplemental", "homely", "deferential" (for minimize) and "referential" are all part of his vocabulary, and at times his text, particularly in an important chapter on the interpretation of genre, reads like a translation from some German pedagogic treatise. Sensitive editing would have produced lighter, more elegant prose.

Sutton's discussion of the pictures is

densely argued, and he has not entirely solved the old problem of how to turn a doctoral dissertation into a readable book. Detailed familiarity with every aspect of the subject is in a book like this, such consistently close argument tends to blur the main lines of the author's approach. What is not his fault, however, is that much of what he writes about specific detail in the pictures has to be taken on trust, since the illustrations are in many cases murky or illegible. It is a great pity that the sheer beauty of de Hooch's work, which is surely not too difficult to reproduce, is hardly conveyed in the plates - nor is the book cheap.

After a survey of the artist's life, Sutton turns his attention to a thorough investigation of the pictures, which were produced at first in Delft and later in Amsterdam. The chapter on the Delft years contains a wide-ranging discussion of de Hooch's relationship with other contemporaries, such as Vermeer, Fabritius and Houckgeest, as well as the little-known Isaak Koedijk, who is threatening to become something of a cult figure in the inner circles of Dutch art history. There is also an illuminating discussion of self society and culture. Turning to the later period, it is part of Sutton's thesis that de Hooch's pictures from about 1670 onwards have previously been too summarily dismissed as the works of a second-rate painter, and that they should be seen in the context of the Dutch art of that time rather than measured against what he produced in Delft. Although Sutton makes a good historical case, it is hard when he turns back to the pictures themselves to feel that as works of art they have been misjudged.

Given the amount of scholarly attention which is now being devoted to the iconography of Dutch art, it is appropriate that Sutton should have included a chapter on the interpretation of de Hooch's pictures, with

particular reference to the less discussed domestic virtues, as reflected in history and literature as well as in art. Although he is sometimes drawn further than he might wish into identifying specific connotations in certain of the paintings, it is his cogently argued belief that in general de Hooch did not introduce symbols into his pictures to be "read" by the spectator. A detailed catalogue of sexual and inhuman aberrations as they are astonishingly chaste. In one big set piece, when he is reviled and rejected by the exponents of what the blameless Minculley, with Byron in mind, called a fit of British hypocrisy, Byron descends from the stage and turns upon his accusers with a tirade against this hypocrisy that is delivered in passionately controlled enunciation; and the rest of the cast, including the admirable Sara Kestelman as both Lady Byron and her daughter Augusta Ada, follow David Essex's example of oratorical exactitude even in the throes of approaching death.

The result is mesmerizing, and indeed the play itself is conceived as an hallucination of Ada's as she suffers the final pains of mortal illness. But it induces a considerable difficulty, for whilst the audience's senses are designedly and appropriately affected as if by poppy or mandragora, those senses need to be exceedingly alert. For there is no point in denying that Mr Linney tells an involved story in an extremely complicated way.

Typically he brings about a scene in which Byron, reciting his own poetry, has a homosexual encounter with a young man he has saved from drowning who had a moment before been Byron himself. There is no

Keith McCulloch